WASHINGTON COLLEGE REVIEW

A Liberal Arts Journal

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Foreword

WORDS, IMAGES, SYMBOLS, and ideas. These are the elements of the creativity of the Washington College students who have contributed to this volume of the *Washington College Review*. Spiritual and social issues concern the writers in their analyses and critiques of books, films, art exhibits, as well as in their original research into ritual and the family, and in their poetry and prose. We, the editors, see much promise here of future creative and scholarly work, and we celebrate it!

The Editorial Board wishes to express our sincere appreciation for the generous assistance from all the faculty and staff of Washington College who have contributed to the success of this volume.

Jeanette E. Sherbondy
Editor

Devilish Contradictions in Mexican-American South Texas

JENNIFER E. LUBKIN

Dice la gente (the people say) that sometimes at night when a Mexican-American dance is in full swing in southern Texas, as so many are, especially on weekend nights; as couples glide in almost choreographed fashion counterclockwise around the floor to the insistent, infectious rhythm of *conjunto* polka music; as men, women, and music and not small amounts of liquor all blend in heightened erotic consciousness, it is then that the devil may appear.[1]

¿Quien es el Diablo?[2]

Blanca: Estaba bien cute, but I didn't really see him. Mi prima told me.

Ester: (demonstrating with outstretched fingers) Con shoulders asi.

Sulema: ¿Estas segura que nomas los shoulders?

Laughter. Embarrassed looks and glances.

Ester: ¡Muy elegante, con suit y todo! (Very elegant with a suit and everything!) Es güero, asi como Robert Redford.

José Limón: So what else happens? Is that it? A handsome guy appears?

Ester: Oh no, then comes the good part. They say that after he came in right over there (motioning to the entrance), a girl sitting with her friends spotted him and she really wanted to dance with him.

Blanca: Well everyone does!

Ester: I know, pero esta la hace ojos (this one makes eyes at him). (In parody and with a laugh, Lola flicks her own heavily made-up eyelids quickly up and down.) So he asks her, y salen a bailar. (Sulema covers her eyes).

Blanca: (in a whisper) This is the good part. This is the good part.

Lola: Shhh!

Ester: And so, as they're dancing, la girl le mira los feet (the feet of a chicken).

Sulema: Goat! goat!

Ester: ¡Chingado, lo que sea! (Goddammit, whatever!) (She then apologizes for using a bad word). Y cuando le vio los feet, la girl grito.

Sulema: And then she faints right there on the floor.

Ester: And then she fainted, Mr. Limón, and he ran to that corner over there and disappeared in a puff of smoke!

[Later]

Ester: I don't know…I kind of like him!

José Limón: Why? He's a devil isn't he?

Ester: Si, pero, he's so *different*! Esta bien chulo (He's so cute, attractive).

Lola: I once met a guy like that in Houston.

José Limón: What do you think he would be like, I mean, as a person?

Lola: Te apuesto que es bien suave (I bet he's real kind, soft, sweet, suave).

José Limón: But he's a devil! What about the goat's feet?

Sulema: Ay, who cares?

Blanca: (With a gesture of putting shoes on a little child and a laugh) ¡Nomas le pones zapatitos! (You just need to put little shoes on him!)

¿Quien es el Diablo?

Menieta: ¡Es puro pedo de viejas! (It's all women's crap!) Mira, Limón: el pedo pasó allá (motioning toward the corner of the dance floor), pero pa'mi…que un bato le metio mano a la ruca (but if you ask me, some dude grabbed the broad's ass). ¡Pero eso que dicen del diablo…es puro pedo! ¡Pedo de viejas! (Women's crap!)

[Later]

Miguel: Los viejas quierien *batos* asi, tu sabes, batos gabachos (Broads want guys like that, you know, like Anglos).

Oscar: Women always want more of everything. They're never satisfied. It's like my wife, "Comprame esto, comprame el otro" (Buy me this, buy me that). Se vuelven locas con las credit cards (They go crazy with the credit cards).

Juan: Chinge, chinge, con que vamos al mall, vamos al mall (Nag, nag, let's go to the mall, let's go to the mall.)

José Limón: I don't quite see the connection. What does that have to do with the devil?

Tomás: It's like the church says, like Eve. ¡Quieria la pinche manzana! (She wanted the damn apple!) So this rich *white* guy, real high society, appears and he tempts them but he disappears pa'que aprendar que no pueden tener todo (so they learn that they can't have everything). But they think they can or they want to, *por eso imaginan todo este pedo* (So that is why they imagine all that shit).

José Limón: But why at the dance?

Julio: ¡Porque aqui nosotros mandamos! ¡Chinga que si! (Because here [at the dance], we [mexicanos] rule! Goddamn right!)[3]

Miguel: ¡Aquí no entran gringos! (Gringos don't [can't] come in here!)

Julio: ¡Vale mas que no! (They better not!)

Tomás: Pero los viejas quieren que entren. ¿Me entiendes? (But the broads want them to come in. Do you know what I mean?) Por

eso hacen ese pedo del diablo (That's why they make up that crap about the devil).

Miguel: ¡Y hasta eso, los gringos no saben bailar! (What's more, gringos can't dance!)

José Limón: People say the gringo devil is a great dancer.

Miguel: Si, pero para el diablo todo es posible (Yes, but for the devil everything is possible).

Julio: Asi son los gringos; para ellos todo es posible (That's the way gringos are; for them everything is possible).

Miguel: Menos el baile. Un gringo entra aquí nomas en forma de diablo (Except for the dance. A gringo can come in here only in the form of the devil).

Oscar: ¡Ni Willy [the 300 pound bouncer] lo puedo parar! ¿Verdad, Willy? (Not even Willy can stop him! Right, Willy?)

Willy: (cups his hand over his crotch) ¡Es todo lo que necesito pa'un pinche diablo! (This is all I need for a damn devil!)

¿Quienes el Diablo?

Don Pedro: The devil comes because today things are out of hand. Girls go out to dances by themselves. En nuestro tiempo, no se via eso (In our time, you didn't see that).

Doña María: There is too much drinking. Outside the dances and even inside, you see *marijuanos.*

Don Javiar: La ultima vez qaue fue, tuve que ir al escusado, y allí estaban los cabrones fumando mugrero (The last time I went to a dance, I went to the restroom and there were bastards smoking trash).

Don Pedro: And the music is so loud, con todos esos aparatos (with all those electronic things).

Doña Norma: And for all this, they charge so much! ¡Se imagina Ud. Señor Limón, *diez dolares!* ¡Ni que fueranos ricos! (Can you imagine Mr. Limón, ten dollars! As if we were rich!) Ya no son como las bailes de antes (They are not like dances used to be). Por eso viene el diablo (That's why the devil comes).

*

In the 1970s in south Texas, anthropologist José E. Limón was "learning what the folks in the barrio already knew and learned anew every day—the devil can take many forms."[4] To analyze these various interpretations of the devil, Limón utilizes (though doesn't fail to critique and build upon) the theory and terminology of postmodern anthropologist Frederic Jameson. Jameson writes of three "horizons of reading," each horizon being a perspective from which to interpret a text so as to show its meaning in various and increasingly broad social contexts.[5]

Those reading from the third and broadest horizon interpret with regard to modes of production—immediately identifying Marxism as a theoretical base. In his work, Limón proposes this is the level from which the elderly in south Texas "read" the devil. Unlike younger men and women, the elders look at the form of society and how societal structure has changed during their lifetime. The devil is an expression of difficult change, "the conflict between wholly different cultural periods or modes of production,"[6] as in the shift this century from a rural-agricultural to urban-industrial economy and the accompanying effects including the marginalization of many Chicanos.[7] Yet, as Limón points out, "to speak of los tiempos de antes [the good ole days] is to invent a tradition, for in the historical lives of the elders they, in fact, experienced a more virulent and intense race and class domination in Mexico and Texas."[8] On the other hand, they possessed a morality visible in economy and etiquette—"For all its hardship era bonita la vida (life was lovely)." The elders do not see a continuance of this morality, and the dance is one very important witness to this societal change.[9]

The second horizon of reading is reached when "the organizing categories of analysis become those of social class"—"the antagonistic and active relationships between 'a dominant and a laboring class'."[10] Remarks of those on this level, made namely by the men in Limón's south Texas, center on issues of race and class. Individual speech becomes a symbolic act which makes evident the dominating social forces and critiques them.[11] For example, in the opening dialogue the mexicanos speak about how the devil and the white man

are both capable of satisfying the women's demands for material goods and, thus, how the two figures are analogous.

Women also have to deal with race and class domination, but unlike most men, women experience gender domination; thus the first horizon of reading interprets gender and sexuality. For these south Texan women, the lore they spin around the figure of the devil is directly associated with their "lived experience," the "Real."[12] When they speak of the devil, they speak very intimately of their own lives: their individual search for a husband, their sexual desires, the role the dance plays in their personal lives.[13] "This devil—who is such a moral threat to the elders, such a race and class threat to...these men, a source of resentment and jealousy—appears to be a sexually charged site of admiration, delight, and playfulness for these women."[14] The devil is the passionate and sensitive male while their husbands are demanding yet defensive and harried. The devil is "an ally, a potent imaginative playful ally,"[15] in the war of the sexes, especially as gender domination exists not only in worklife and churchlife but in homelife and lovelife.

According to Jameson, these three readings recover or maintain "their urgency for us only if they are retold within the unity of a single great collective story,"[16] but it is Limón who takes this to the point of creating a fourth horizon of reading. He suggests that each interpretation of the devil is a way in which "folklore can, in its most disguised and symbolic form, speak critically to...domination."[17] Elders speaking against economic and cultural domination, men speaking against racial and class domination, women speaking against gender domination create a collective. It is this collective reading which is the fourth horizon, where a communal body, rather than a number of individuals, "takes multiple readings of the same text and in doing so produces and enhances their collectivity even while allowing their different perspectives."[18]

It is this fourth horizon which makes possible the continuance of the war against Anglo dominance. Originally it was a "war of maneuver," literal and political strategic warfare in which the victory was as yet undecided.[19] But since the end of the Mexican-American

War and the further spread of capitalism and Anglo culture into south Texas, it has become a "war of position," a situation where "one side has achieved nearly complete dominance, making open maneuver nearly impossible."[20] The dominant has gained institutional control while the dominated attempt to organize along ethnic and/or class lines to maintain/acquire some political power.[21] Organization is facilitated by the fourth reading; it is the collectivity around the symbol being interpreted—the dancing devil—and the further collectivity that forms around the war which leads to identification as a "we," an ethnic group. *We*, together, with interweaving narratives of the devil; and *we*, together, manipulating the symbol of the devil to express our struggle—a struggle which Limón perhaps simplifies as *we* (Mexican-American south Texans) versus *them* (Anglo domination). It is a struggle to maintain cohesive ethnic identity while having to work within the American capitalist system. Limón never explores exactly what or who it is south Texans feel they are fighting; instead, the generic and perhaps incorrect term of "Anglo" is used, denying the complexity of the "enemy" as well as restricting an exploration of the struggle.

Limón does recognize, however, the contradictions evident in the dance of the south Texans—both the literal dance in the hall as well as the more metaphorical dance in society—as the war may also become internal. "I had the sharp sense of the expressive well-armed truce…'Simón, compa. Tienes que moverte de aquellas y no pegarle a nadie. Sino se vuelve puro pedo (Sure buddy, you've got to move nicely and not hit anybody. Otherwise everything goes to shit."[22] It's a world in which one is "subjected to searches by and the watchfulness of bouncers and security guards, trying to make sure no one dies from 'communitas'."[23] It is clear that in south Texas the struggle between *we* and *they* also becomes a struggle between me and you, both of *we*.

> As more drugs, alcohol, opportunistic sexuality, and violence begin to mark the dance scene as a site of cultural contradiction, the devil also enters the dance to mark this contradiction. And it is contradiction, for there is no singular culture

> here as the devil answers to the varying needs, especially the varying gender needs, of my folks under this new form of warfare.[24]

The devil marks the contradiction but, though left unannunciated by Limón, the structural source of contradiction is the ability of the fourth horizon to encourage a collectivity while simultaneously recognizing distinct subgroups within south Texas culture. As Limón points out, the devil can act as a unifying symbol for all those who agree upon the use and meaning of the devil as a symbol while manipulated to express real divisions which establishes a "we" (south Texan) versus a "they" (Anglo) at the same time as it recognizes critical differences among south Texan groups: *we* (men) versus *they* (women), *we* (elderly) versus *they* (young).

In her ethnography of Japanese identity, *Rice as Self,* Ohnuki-Tierney makes the claim that commensality is a basis for ethnic identity. "People who eat together become 'we,' as opposed to 'they,' and the food shared becomes a metaphor for the social group."[25] But she recognizes that *we* versus *they* can occur on many levels: rice in different contexts might identify a specific group within Japan, all of Japan, or even all of rice-eating Asia. Limón argues that dance, and specifically dance with the devil, rather than food can also form the basis of *we*. Or rather, a *we*: even though Limón identifies himself as a south Texan, he is unable to dance with the devil. Though he can understand the devil academically—he has completed an anthropological study of the symbol of the devil and knows linguistically how to use the symbol—the south Texan devil figure is not a viable expression of Limón's life. He's lived outside of south Texas for some time and has achieved an economic and educational level above most south Texans. If he is fighting Anglo domination, it is from deep within Anglo institutions; at least to some extent, Limón is seen by other south Texans as one of *them*: "[Sulema] confesses that she and *las girls* have been worried about me. I'm not like the other men, she says. The girls were afraid I'd get hurt or that people at the university

might find out that I was hanging around with people like that and I might lose my job...Those aren't places for a man like me, she says."[26]

Perhaps Limón also fails to see how the defined *we* can change depending on context because he fails to recognize other south Texans who are unable to *dance*—physically dance—with the devil. Limón suggests that the dance event is the "one major area of critical distance and difference" in south Texas, and the infiltration by Anglo culture into the dance hall spurs on the appearance of the devil. This is why, he says, the devil does not appear just anywhere, "let us say, in your backyard in the dead of night."[27] Yet the devil does appear in the backyard in the bright of day. A friend sent me a letter in which he tells of some of his childhood memories concerning the devil. Jorge Cisneros[28] was born in the late seventies, a couple years before Limón finished this segment of his fieldwork:

> When my friends and I played at cars we'd dig holes in the dirt and fill them with water. We imagined it to be the thirsty Devil who would then draw the water into his lair; once I thought I saw a slash in the hole into which the water seeped, and I thought it was his nails that had done that. Satan would walk around the neighbourhood; we could hear him on the rooftops and see his footprints in the dirt: one goat hoof and one chicken leg. We could hear his laughter coming from the monte.

Limón fails throughout *Dancing With the Devil* to explore a group of the population essential to the future of Chicanos in south Texas and integral to the war of position: children. Where are the children? The children *play* with the devil in their own backyard.

Why this oversight? Because Limón fails to explore the devil in south Texas outside of the dance hall. He rejects other anthropologists' interpretations of the devil as a religious or cultural figure,[29] even despite the frequent portrayal of the devil in a Catholicism specific to south Texas. As Cisneros tells me, the parable of Jesus and his

temptations by the devil in the desert is moved to the monte, the scrubland of the border. The monte, as a wilderness, often appears in stories of the devil. And there are many of these stories taking place outside of the dance hall; there are abundant representations of the devil and devil-related figures in Mexico and south Texas. Also, how was the devil portrayed and interpreted before the advent of capitalism and Anglo domination? What is the origin of the devil or a similar figure as symbol? Limón's particularly Marxist interpretation fails to explore the evolution of the devil as symbol, a fault which Ohnuki-Tierney would perhaps cite as fatal considering her emphasis on a long-term historical approach to symbolic anthropology.

Rather than exploring symbolism of the devil in society outside the dance hall and how this shapes the devil inside the dance hall, Limón uses the predominant portion of his book to criticize his predecessors. Though this is a valuable endeavor—for as Limón notes, the discipline of anthropology (at least pre-postmodernist anthropology) tends to suppress the disorderly aspect of human culture—perhaps the place for it was not in this work which the reader is led to assume will explore the devil in the society and culture of Mexican-American south Texas.

In fact, Limón's interpretation of the devil seems fairly simplistic. Following in Jameson's footsteps, he maintains a language of domination and war so familiar to this American reader that it encourages me to question whether it is a language superimposed by anthropologists or the terms by which south Texans describe their own condition. For example, Limón cites journalism, labor unions and nonviolent politics as arenas in both the war of maneuver *and* the war of position.[30] For one involved in the war, is the assertion that the war has changed though the arenas have stayed the same not indicative of an arbitrary line in the sand? Furthermore, the conversation quoted of the mexicanos and mexicanas indicates a complexity which Limón only begins to hint at.[31] Most striking is the use of sexual language, especially used by the males to apply the devil to their relationships with their wives—certainly this does not fall easily into a horizon of reading, being neither of the second (solely an

issue of race or class) nor of the first (an issue of gender domination). Perhaps it's Limón's own adopted language of analysis which leads him astray, for it is not in "reading" the devil that collectivity and contradiction are formed but in speaking about the devil, and thus manipulating the symbol of the devil. Studying this exertion of agency more specifically would have perhaps brought Limón closer to realizing more fully the complexity of El Diablo.

Who is the devil? I'm not sure I can say after having read this book, for the devil dances little through Limón's ethnography but teases much. He appears as a symbol of identity not only for Mexican-American south Texas in its war against "Anglo" domination, but within south Texas as an identifier for various populations grouped by age, gender, occupation, educational achievement, class, etc. He's the man who cheers on immorality, yet he's the man who stimulates folk beliefs, yet he's the ideal man to marry. There's much to study, and I would encourage Limón to continue his hunt of devilish contradictions in his own backyard but beyond the dance hall.

END NOTES

1. José E. Limón, *Dancing with the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1994), 172.

2. The following dialogues are adapted from *Dancing with the Devil.* The first from pages 172 to 174; the second from pages 168 and 175 to 176; the third from 174 to 175. I have kept the accents, spellings and translation of the Spanish as published in *Dancing with the Devil.*

3. Limón, 175.

4. Ibid., ix.

5. Ibid., 180.

6. Ibid., 181.

7. Ibid., 99.

8. Ibid., 181.
9. Ibid., 181–2.
10. Ibid., 182.
11. Ibid., 183.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., 184–5.
15. Ibid., 185.
16. Qtd. in Limón, 180.
17. Limón, 185.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid, 25–6.
20. Ibid., 41.
21. Ibid., 42.
22. Ibid., 171
23. Ibid., 158.
24. Ibid., 180.
25. Emiko Ohnuko-Tierney, *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities Through Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 9.
26. Limón, 177.
27. Ibid., 180.
28. Jorge Cisneros, personal communication.
29. Limón, 178.
30. Ibid., 26, 42.
31. Ibid., 185.

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Limón, José E. *Dancing with the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas.* Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1994.

Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko. *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities Through Time.* Princeton: Princeton University, 1993.

Le Vaudou en Haiti: Une Force Radicale

MEGAN KILBY

HAITI IS A REMARKABLE COUNTRY that has both an unusual past and an uncertain future. From the time Christopher Columbus landed on the shores of Haiti until the Haitians' successful battle for independence in 1803, the country was mainly populated by slaves and freed workers. During this three-hundred-year period, Haiti was colonized by a succession of European countries, including Spain and France.

The Spanish brought the first African slaves to Haiti and, in doing so, unknowingly set the stage for the establishment of *Vaudou*. This syncretic religion has been part of Haitian identity since the colonial period when it was used as a means of resistance against oppressors. The isolation which followed Haitian independence allowed *Vaudou* to become an integral part of Haitian existence. Haiti's characteristic political and social instability explains the necessity for a religion that orders all aspects of life.

Few religions have been the object of as much speculation and hearsay as *Vaudou*. A close study reveals that its main focus is on healing, not black magic. *Vaudou* does not have the strong formal doctrine that Christian religions generally do, nor does it involve the direct worship of a single god. There is one "god," *Bondye*, but since he is so busy, Haitians deal with the various *loas* that represent different aspects of the human experience. The practice of this religion varies from village to village which makes it unique yet difficult to study without experiencing firsthand. In the following essay, I will demonstrate that *Vaudou* is a radical force in Haitians' lives.

*

Pour la plupart des gens, Haïti est un pays mystérieux et méconnu. Les Américains peuvent écarter Haïti d'emblée parce que le pays est si pauvre. On pourrait dire qu'on a déjà essayé de l'aider, comme un patriarche, mais rien n'a changé. "Le paradoxe d' Haïti c'est qu'après [un] acte de libération d'une vigueur et d'une beauté exceptionnelles, l'île soit devenue la proie d'une succession de dictateurs, tyrans sanguinaires et brutaux qui l'ont conduite à sa situation actuelle."[1] La vérité est qu' Haïti est un pays très pauvre et apparemment impuissant parce que même après avoir acquis son indépendance, il est toujours exploité par les dictateurs de l'intérieur et par les pays puissants comme les Etats-Unis au dehors.

Les Haïtiens, "descendants of former slaves and freed people, the *affranchis*, who fought and defeated the French army in the late eighteenth century,"[2] ont toujours subi une forme de colonialisme mais ils n'ont jamais cédé à leurs oppresseurs. Plusieurs hommes ont mené les soulèvements contre les Français. Boukman et Makandal étaient chefs des revoltes contre les blancs ainsi qu'autorités de la religion Vaudou. Toussaint Louverture a repris contrôle de Saint Domingue pour la rendre aux Français vers 1795 et sous Toussaint le pouvoir du gouvernement français dans la colonie s'est affaibli. En 1802 cependant, les troupes de Napoléon sont arrivées à Saint Domingue et ont réussi à renverser le gouvernement de Toussaint Louverture. Le Général Jean-Jacques Dessalines a guidé les esclaves et les mulâtres contre les français et ils ont gagné leur lutte vers la fin de 1803.

Le Vaudou était un moyen de résister aux Français pour les Haïtiens de l'époque coloniale. "It is easy to see why both Vodun and Kreyol are feared by the Haitian elite and their foreign allies, as both indicate an ideological coherence and potential power that could be exercised by the peasantry and the urban poor."[3] La religion, le Vaudou, et la langue, le Créole, unifient les Haïtiens et l'importance de cette identité culturelle fait d'Haïti un pays très unique.

Le nom colonial d'Haïti sous les Espagnols était Santo Domingo et sous les Français son nom était Saint Domingue. Après s'être émancipés de la France, les Haïtiens ont affirmé leur liberté et leur

identité en changeant le nom du pays. "Haiti means 'mountainous land' in the Arawak language of the original Taino inhabitants."[4] Les Espagnols étaient les premiers colonisateurs d'Haïti et en 1501 ils ont apporté les premiers esclaves africains à Haïti. Saint Domingue était sous le contrôle de la France entre 1625 et 1804.

> In the second half of the eighteenth century it created more wealth than any other colony in the world.... Almost none of that wealth was left in Haiti.... Overall investments in the Haitian economic infrastructure were meager compared to the enormous profits and trade advantage gained by France.[5]

Un petit pourcentage de la population était constitué d'une élite française et le reste de pauvres esclaves et affranchis. "The eradication of African religious ideas had been a priority of planters throughout the Americas because the planters understood that the African religion would undermine their colonial power and authority."[6] Les doutes des colonisateurs étaient bien fondés, comme je vais le démontrer.

Malgré les efforts des missionnaires catholiques de convertir les Africains, les esclaves se sont souvent réunis dans des pseudo-bals pour pratiquer leur religion, le Vaudou.

> We are ready to concede that the religious side of such meetings was incidental to their political goals, but the fact cannot be denied that Vodoun was the cement which bound the members of the conspiracy and that it served as a catalyst when the time for action came.[7]

Le Vaudou, une religion syncrétique, a forgé des liens d'une part au sein de la diaspora africaine qui était constituée des esclaves d'Haïti et d'autre part avec le continent africain.

> It was the nonmaterial African inheritance that survived most vigorously in Haiti, stories and legends, religious concepts, herb and leaf doctoring, the belief in and practice of magic, music, dance, manners, concepts of right and wrong, attitudes toward marriage, attitudes toward the dead—these elements of African life persisted strongly.[8]

En d'autres termes ces descendants d'Africains ont retenu leur vision du monde à travers la pratique journalière du Vaudou.

Cette vision du monde leur a permis de lutter contre la réalité coloniale et de vaincre les Français. "If religion is opium, then it should be emphasised that opium is not always a sedative, but may become a source of inspiration and a prelude to action."[9] Le Vaudou a colmaté les Haïtiens et leur a donné le pouvoir commun de lutter contre leurs oppresseurs. "Haiti gained independence through one of the few 'real' revolutions in history, in which swift, violent, and radical change occurs in the political, economic, social, and cultural conditions of a country."[10] Haïti a acquis son indépendance, proclamée le premier janvier 1804, bien avant les autres colonies des Caraïbes, certaines, comme la Guadeloupe, ne l'ont pas encore acquise. L'isolement d'Haïti après son indépendance a contribué à renforcer la puissance du Vaudou dans cet état. En peu de temps les Haïtiens ont développé une agriculture de subsistance sans être exploités par d'autres pays et leur culture a prosperé. Le Vaudou et Le Créole, les fondements de la culture haïtienne, sont devenus plus forts.

"Vodoun is an institution which lends itself to contradictory interpretations, all of which are partially correct."[11] Il faut se rendre compte de ce risque avant de se livrer à une étude du Vaudou. J'ai fait des recherches sur le Vaudou haïtien dans plusieurs sources et j'ai eu l'impression que chaque source m'apprenait quelque chose de différent. Le Vaudou n'a pas de hiérarchie, il est différent dans chaque village, donc on ne peut pas faire de généralisations sur cette religion. Je vous conseille donc de faire votre propre recherche sur le sujet avant d'accepter les fruits de mon étude. Pour les Américains et pour beaucoup d'Européens, le Vaudou est caché derrière une image de magie noire. "Christianity, Islam, Freemasonry, aboriginal Taino/Arawak religions, and a compendium of religious ideas borrowed from the Dahomean, Yoruba, Igbo, Congolese, and other African cultures have contributed to Vodoun and its historical development."[12] Le Vaudou est un mélange de diverses idées religieuses. En Vaudou haïtien il y a un dieu, *Bondye* (créole pour bon Dieu), mais

les gens ne s'adressent pas directement à lui, il est trop pressé pour être en contact avec tous ses disciples, mais ils savent qu'il est toujours là au fond. Au lieu de parler au *Bondye*, les gens s'addresse aux *loas*, les mystères. Vaudou "is a true religion which attempts to tie the unknown to the known and establish order where there might otherwise be chaos. For those who believe in Vodoun, no event or episode is a thing in itself."[13] Les relations que quelqu'un maintient avec les loas determinent la vie de cet individu. L'état d'esprit des *loas* est très important, si le *loa* est heureux tout va bien mais si un individu ignore son *loa*, le *loa* se fâche. L'*houngan* ou la *mambo*, le prêtre et la prêtresse Vaudous, d'un individu choisissent le loa à qui l'individu ressemble le plus et cela devient son *loa*. Donc les gens laissent le contrôle de leurs vies aux *loas*.

Les *loas* sont très nombreux. Ils sont souvent liées visuellement aux saints catholiques mais ils ne sont pas tout à fait identiques. *Legba* est le gardien entre la terre et le monde des invisibles. *Papa Ghede* est le *loa* de la mort et la résurrection, il est très érotique et amusant. *Dumballah* est le père du groupe, il est souvent représenté par des serpents. *Ogoun* est le guerrier, il est violent et en ce sens il représente les luttes politiques d'aujourd'hui. *Erzulie* est le *loa* de la beauté et de l'amour, elle est comme la mère du groupe. "The Vodou spirits are not models of the well-lived life; rather, they mirror the full range of possibilities inherent in the particular slice of life over which they preside."[14] Il est plus facile pour les Haïtiens de se rapporter aux *loas* du Vaudou parce qu'ils partagent les mêmes caractéristiques, les *loas* sont réalistes. Les cérémonies sont des fêtes pour les *loas* et incluent la danse, les tambours, et les chants. "Les Chansons du Vodoun constituent la mémoire de son peuple, [c'est] une mémoire vivante, dynamique car elle est renouvelée, adaptée aux circonstances."[15] Dans des cérémonies les *loas* montent les participants - les participants sont décrits comme des *chevaux*. Un individu peut être pris par un *loa* et la personne devient ce *loa*.

D'autres êtres spirituels qui sont centraux au Vaudou sont les ancêtres et les jumeaux, *Marassa*. "In the Afro-Haitian view, the family includes not only all the living who are descended from common

ancestors, but the family dead as well...the spirits of the dead must be forever coped with."16 Dans le Vaudou les ancêtres peuvent devenir les loas. La famille est importante pour les Haïtiens. Les jumeaux représentent les forces du bien et du mal et sont aussi heureux et tristes, ils sont des opposés.

Les fonctions principales des *houngans* et *mambos* sont "healing, performing religious ceremonies to call or pacify the spirits, holding initiations for new priests, telling the future and reading dreams, casting spells and creating protections, creating potions for various services."[17] Ils sont tout pour tout le monde comme la religion elle-même. "La Vodoun est donc multiple car il est toutes choses pour ses enfants de la diaspora du nouveau monde. Il est médecine, justice, police, art, danse, musique ainsi que pratique religieuse."[18] Il n'y a pas de hiérarchie dans cette religion. Chaque *houngan* ou *mambo* a son propre *hounfor* et chaque région d' Haïti a sa propre version de la religion. "A local cult center flourishes if it has the support and trust of the community, fades away if the houngan fails to impress the community as being strong."[19] Evidemment le Vaudou n'est pas une religion très normative mais le Vaudou a une puissance indéniable en Haïti.

Il y plusieurs caracteristiques du Vaudou qui sont uniques: "Mambos and houngans play equal roles in the Vodun religion, and Vodun has never differentiated between the roles and contributions of the male priest over the female."[20] Cette égalité entre les hommes et les femmes est rare dans les religions monothéistes. Les Haïtiens croient que les hommes et les femmes sont égaux dans le monde spirituel.

Depuis la colonisation d'Haïti les Catholiques ont essayé de débarrasser Haïti du Vaudou. Les Protestants haïtiens et les Catholiques ne sont pas souvent d'accord mais tous les deux refusent le Vaudou. "The Protestant radio station, Radio Lumière, called [Vaudou] a 'national curse' that should be 'uprooted.' About 300 Vodun priests were murdered in 1986, but little coverage was given to that massacre."[21] Les Protestants et Catholiques ne peuvent pas accepter le Vaudou comme une religion légitime. "Protestant missionaries teach Haitians that they are backward and poor because

they are mired in sin. Thus Haiti's poverty vis-à-vis the United States is rationalized on spiritual grounds."[22] A travers cette présence, l'idée colonisatrice se perpétue au vingtième siècle. Les missionnaires n'arrivent pas à croire que le Vaudou puisse offrir aux Haïtiens quelque chose que les autres religions ne peuvent pas leur procurer. Le Vaudou n'est pas seulement une religion, c'est aussi une vision du monde. Les Haïtiens ne pratiquent pas le Vaudou, ils vivent le Vaudou. "Vodou is the system they have devised to deal with the suffering that is life, a system whose purpose is to minimize pain, avoid disaster, cushion loss, and strengthen survivors and survival instincts."[23] La vie d'un Haïtien est difficile, il ne peut pas dépendre sur le gouvernement, il a sa famille et le Vaudou pour le soutenir.

> Christianity has seemed to offer only doctrine and guidelines to behavior, whereas Vodoun offers doctrine, social controls, a pattern of family relations...emotional release...meaningful socializing, drama...folklore, motivation...individual initiatives...treatment of ailments...protection of fields, fertility, and a continuing familiar relationship with the ancestors.[24]

Le Vaudou est une religion qui fait tout pour tout le monde. Elle est irremplaçable.

La vie d'un Haïtien n'a jamais été facile. Il est pauvre et il souffre dans les mains de son propre gouvernement et souvent dans celles des étrangers. La ressource principale d'Haïti est son peuple et leur ressource principale est le Vaudou. Le Vaudou est leur poids et leur appui.

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4. Ibid., 4.
5. Ibid., xviii.
6. Ibid., 40.
7. Rémy Bastien, "Vodoun and Politics in Haiti," in *Religion and Politics in Haiti*, edited by Theodore Stoddard (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Cross-Cultural Research, 1966), 42.
8. Harold Courlander, "Voudoun in Haitian Culture," in *Religion and Politics in Haiti*, edited by Theodore Stoddard (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Cross-Cultural Research, 1966), 2–3.
9. David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence In Haiti* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979), 32.
10. Bellegarde-Smith, xviii.
11. Bastien, 39.
12. Bellegarde-Smith, 12.
13. Courlander, 12.
14. Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 6.
15. *Vodoun Culture*, <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/5319> (17 November 1998).
16. Courlander, 14.
17. Bob Corbett, *Introduction to Voodoo in Haiti*, <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/index.html> (13 November 1998).
18. *Vodoun Culture.*
19. Courlander, 13.
20. Bellegarde-Smith, 26.
21. Ibid., 150.
22. Ibid., 103.
23. Brown, 10.
24. Courlander, 21.

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Egypt

LUKE OWENS

Between two legs of golden sand
That stretch to a salty, curled sea,
The desert moistens, fecund and sweet
Enough for a valley of kings.

Long ago, before the words
Of our fathers, the kings
Marched, cobra-headed,
To the water beneath the trees.

And there was love: lips, hands, hair
Pushing into water, translucent shadows
Like the lines between chisel and rock.
And there was no death, only pickled eternity,

And the desert arose, impregnated,
As if the sleeping kings deep in the earth
Stretched praying hands to touch the sun,
Waiting to be summoned, for the rough beast

To lift its shattered visage from the sand
And force all the mighty to despair.
But now the king of kings rests stiff and supine
In a crystal coffin in some cold room.

Do voices voiceless give him breath
Each night before the birth of dawn?
What sleeping memory wakes him,
Shriveled and hollow in the almost-dark?

What bids him seek out the cracked remains
Of his painted heart?

A Dream about Andrew Wyeth

ERIN TOTTENHAM

He was obsessed with Maine and how the snowdrifts
on the hills behind his barn turned colors
whenever he tried to paint them. He asked me
what I felt it meant, staring out of glass
blue eyes, fine forehead wrinkles content
to be deepening into old man. He wore
a gray wool coat with quarter-size buttons, black,
a brown scarf soaked with winter's smoky scent.
He waited for my answer. I said,
"I call New England comforting when I wake up, frozen,
twelve inches of snow tip-toeing in and out
around the trunks of the pines by the pond.
I call New England home when the sun has burned
the grasses and wind pours over a still day. I feel, perhaps,
She is thanking you for the colors you've called her for years
and loved her with all those tan green blues on canvas."
His pale lips curled. He asked, "What do you want?"
I said, shades swimming inside me,
"I want to live simply with quiet complications
and dream like you've painted."
"Then you'll live here always," he said.

The Fundamental Theory of Calculus

JENNIFER REEDER

If I am a sine curve,
my derivative is cosine memory multiplied against actuality.

Limited past one,

but give me orange warning cones between zero
(level-headed, immersed in a book at oceanside calm)
and pi (blueberry,
a la mode), and the
area under one arch alone is equivalent
to the solemnity of my decades (two).

Substitute through where x equals time or
x equals the number of Lincolnheads I've tossed
into waterfalls: the future

subtracted from the past.

If I am a sine curve, plotted
on a one-to-one axis,
I dip, a Good Humorman rescuing chocolate eclairs on a stick.
There are infinite arches limping east, west,
shading lightly each to each.

The lines are ballpoint thin
(Pilot, BP-S, fine, black).
Watch me walk on edge,
heel and heel,
balancing upon a fire zone curb.
When I slip, I bite my lip
(my dog just got run over by a truck), and
tears factor through my eyes like five divided into two hundred
and twelve.

For despite what Archimedes said,
sine curves have feelings, too.

Maryam's Family

JORGE ALEJANDRO CISNEROS

I DO NOT KNOW how to broach the first question. I have explained the purposes of this interview, but as it comes to starting, I realize the dangers I risk by probing into Maryam's private life. Ask me about my family and you will quickly have me pulling out every little anecdote I can summon to try to give a feeling of what it was like to grow up at home. Then you'd begin to sense my frustration as I come against the roadblock of trying to translate voices, smells, and shadows into words—and perhaps some slight bitterness as well, masked by wistfulness, as I take that elusiveness to mean I have lost touch with the past, with family, as Time's exile.

I am afraid to step unaware into sensitive areas. I make an effort to take careful steps, but ultimately I stumble clumsily into my first question.

"So—you have a mother?"

Biologically it's the safest and surest question to ask, but I wince at its social presumptions: normalcy, stability, everything that goes along with "mother." Would I uncover painful abandonment? I don't want Maryam to be angry at me. I breathe relief as she answers yes, with happiness, and I draw the line between her circle-representation on the page to a circle-woman from the previous generation.[1] But she stops me as I connect circle-mother to a triangle-father.

"I've been told I had a father once." My mouth becomes a thin, down-turned line. She never knew him; he left early on and has since died. Despite his leaving there is no bitterness, no feeling of loss evident, as Maryam tells me this.

Reassured, I grope for the next clumsy question: "Do you think your family is 'traditional'?"

The strands of complex information she gives me make it clear that continuing the diagram during the interview is out of the question. I wonder, as I listen to her, if I'll have to find some way of producing a three-dimensional structural representation of her family. Only after our first interview did I, with great help from Maryam, construct the diagram. Though I will present the description first, you must bear in mind that I came to such neatness only after a struggle to understand the dynamics of her family.

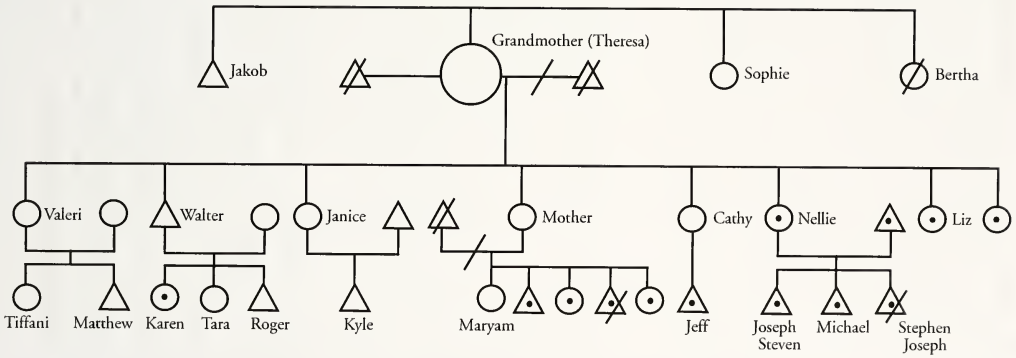
*

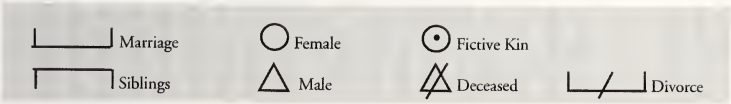
I redraw the circle that represents Maryam on a new sheet of paper. Examine the siblings lying along the same generational level (see figure on page 29); this was my dilemma. How should fictive relationships be represented on the graph, if they should be represented at all? Our interview has made me realize that they must be considered as much a part of the family as those members related by blood. Thus I draw them descending, along with Maryam, from her mother. Her two brothers and two sisters are distinguished as "fictive kin" only by the black dot in the middle of their icons.

I move to her mother's level, and I extend the sibling bar to both sides of the page to make room for her many aunts. Maryam's mother is the youngest in the family; Valerie, Walter, Janice, and Cathy, from youngest to oldest, are separated in age by two to three years. Then I connect her mother's generation to their spouses. All are married, except for the eldest, Cathy. But I have made room along the bar for even more "aunts." I get the feeling this is a nebulous designation and perhaps many more names could be added than came out during the interview. Nellie and Liz, fictive kin, descend from the same parents as Maryam's blood aunts; again, the only difference indicated is the centered dot.

Maryam stops as I draw the lines from her aunts to their children, her cousins: Tiffany, Matthew, Karen, Tara, Roger, PJ, Jeff, Kyle, Joseph Steven, Michael, and Steven Joseph. "Karen . . . I have to write Karen," she breaks in with a smile. And Joseph Steven: "He was my sweetie." A bit of sadness there. He died at the age of eleven, she says. I mark a diagonal line through his triangle.

MARYAM'S FAMILY





We turn again to her mother's generation to connect all of them—aunts, mother, cousins—to the grandmother. In the sketch, I draw her circle largest for the fundamental role she plays in the family. She is, in effect, the only person who truly belongs at the top level; the two husbands are peripheral, and though the role they played is crucial to how the family understands itself, the grandmother's siblings are no more than vague names.

Maryam has insisted that all the circles and triangles be given their proper names. I think that otherwise the diagram would have been meaningless to her. With every name comes a story. I am thankful she has shared so many anecdotes; she has breathed a spark of life into the circles and triangles drawn on the page.

*

Any explanation for the uniqueness of the family must have its beginning with the grandmother, Theresa Dmitrick Janeway, who had lost her own family. Her brother, Jacob, and sister, Sophie, moved away one day without notice or good-bye. And with Bertha there was a fight and an enmity which lasted through twenty-seven years of estrangement, until it was ended by death. Theresa made sure to impart to her descendants as a guiding principle the importance and necessity of keeping the family together, geographically and emotionally.

With this foundation, it has not been uncommon for several aunts and their children to live in one house. Maryam and her mother lived for a while with an aunt in the grandmother's house. Because of the grandmother's great desire to always have her children close, her house has become the focal point of family gatherings. The family remains close in spirit and locale, with its members' houses clustered in a corridor from Pennsylvania to New Jersey. Despite the passage of time since the grandmother's death, her house remains the location for this year's Thanksgiving feast. The entire family of aunts, cousins, and fictive kin will be there.

This closeness remains a reality because the family has consciously put the grandmother's teaching into action. There have been numerous cases of substance abuse in the family. Maryam tells me that her biological grandfather was an "alcoholic schizoid," whose problems led the grandmother to divorce him. The next generation, which has also had its share of drug use, do not allow the consequences to tear the family apart; with the grandmother's lesson ever in mind, they have turned into a caring support group, watching out for each other and even taking in their sisters' children for a while. This shared struggle turns the grandmother's lesson into practiced and proven reality. The ties of family grew strong among Maryam's mother's siblings; now there is a further unifying effort as they see the younger generation coming of age with its own struggles.

For Maryam, it is the most natural thing in the world to have her family diagram sprinkled with fictive kin. She explains the process of adoption to me: "One day it's time for maybe a family gathering, and then we say, 'Oh, of course this person can come—she's family.'" The adoption is ratified by the whole family's consensus. Maryam explains the terms the family uses. A "cousin" is a child brought into the family by one of Maryam's aunts; an "aunt" is someone whom the grandmother adopted herself. The fictive kin become as much a part of the family as the blood relations. Thinking of Joseph Steven, she says, "The death of a cousin is like the death of blood."

The Janeway family is an open, flexible unit. Maryam explains these characteristics as a necessary consequence of the difficult negotiations that have to be made when struggling with substance abuse while still maintaining the grandmother's spirit. The family members see themselves (so Maryam describes them) as being very accepting and nonjudgmental of the problems a person may be enduring. There have developed patterns where an aunt may take a niece into her house when the parents of the child are unable to take care of her; this ingrained concern for young people extends beyond blood

kin to allow outsiders to enter the family and find a safe haven when they otherwise have none. It was the grandmother's practice, and it continues to this day.

This open system has become fundamental to the family's identity; "family" are those who maintain binding ties. Conversely, there are genetic relations who are not even considered as part of the family. Maryam speaks of affinal uncles whom she never knew, who didn't turn out to be very nice men and who were subsequently divorced. From Maryam's perspective, though there may have been a marriage ceremony, these men never came into the family. In contrast, although Aunt Janice died two years ago, her husband remains Uncle. The branch of the family from the grandmother's second marriage is considered separately. "They weren't very nice people," Maryam tells me. Though these people were related by blood and by marriage, because they neither maintained contact or preserved the family spirit, they do not appear in the family diagram.

For Maryam, the family does not exist in a bundle of memories. She has active relationships maintained by continuing contact with her kin. Maryam admits some guilty feelings when she mentions that she has not yet written to her cousin Karen. E-mail is beginning to be another way the family stays in touch. But family gatherings remain the most important, for they are pivotal in cementing relationships. The anticipatory anxiety of such a gathering makes Maryam ill in this week before the Thanksgiving holiday.

For blood relations there is no excuse for losing contact. The family exerts good-natured pressure on them to come back if they begin to lose touch ("We force them to come back," Maryam says half-jokingly). For fictive kin, though, the loss of contact is more readily accepted: "We just assume they don't want to hang around with us anymore." Thus, over a period of time, members of the family may be lost, while others may be incorporated.

*

I ask Maryam to define family: "people who you love, support you, [are] there for you. They don't have to be blood, but this family

must be there for you. We were raised to believe this." The grandmother's lesson provides the essential paradigm for the family's identification. Her example shows the pain of family separation—a dissolution which she resolved with effort reaching across generations. Theresa Dmitrick Janeway has not only helped her family survive despite the destruction wrought by substance abuse, but also encouraged a tightly knit togetherness that is actively and joyfully maintained, to be celebrated once more when the family comes together at grandmother's house.

END NOTE

1. See diagram of "Maryam's Family" on page 29.

La Nourriture et La Religion dans *Le Festin De Babette* (Food and Religion in *Babette's Feast)*

CECILIA M. RIVAS

THE FILM *Babette's Feast* (directed by G. Axel, 1987) is a unique work, a French–Danish collaboration on more levels than one. The film explores the role of food not only in everyday life but also in extraordinary occasions such as the sumptuous dinner served by the French cook. Food becomes a character, an amazingly magnetic entity.

In this article I examine the ways in which the meal Babette prepared for the two Danish sisters and their religious congregation fulfills the qualities of a feast. I will also examine the extent to which religion plays a part in the meal: it can be seen that religion and the commemoration of the founder of the congregation helps the group's members overcome their differences and accept their mortality. Babette, a cooking genius, manages to bridge the spiritual and physical aspects of a meal in an imaginative and compelling way.

*

Puis ayant appelé toutes les troupes, il leur dit:

> Ecoutez-moi vous tous, et entendez. Il n'y a rien de ce qui est hors de l'homme, qui, entrant au-dedans de lui, puisse le souiller; mais les choses qui sortent de lui, ce sont celles qui souillent l'homme.[1]

Le Festin de Babette (Axel, 1987) est un film intéressant à beaucoup de niveaux. Aussi, comme le titre le suggère, la nourriture en est un thème central. La représentation de la nourriture et ses fonctions dans le film sont essentielles pour comprendre comment le banquet

remplit les douze caractéristiques d'un festin énumérés par Josef Pieper, un philosophe.[2]

De plus, le repas extravagant dans *Le Festin de Babette* peut être comparé au Dernier Repas du Christ avec ses apôtres, représenté dans La Bible. Les deux événements ont un air religieux, et, à degrés variables, de réjouissance. Le festin de Babette est extravagant, une nouveauté pour la congrégation. Après le dîner, les membres de la congrégation semblent plus conscients de leur mortalité, et aussi plus satisfaits de leur condition d'humains qui pèchent.

Un festin a plusieurs caractéristiques: selon Pieper,[3] il y a douze éléments qui, ensemble, forment le concept de festivité. Tous les éléments sont remplis d'une manière ou d'une autre par le grand festin que Babette prépare pour la congrégation. Aussi, le Dernier Repas est un fait religieux très important pour les Chrétiens. Le dernier repas est symbolique parce qu'il marque le sacrifice que Jésus a fait pour sauver l'humanité.[4] Dans *Le Festin de Babette,* le sacrifice est également représenté.

Le site des événements du film est le Jutland, au Danemark. Le paysage est dans les tons gris et beige. Le petit village est près de la mer. Ce lieu donne un air de simplicité presque austère à la scène, un air qui devient ensuite festif grâce à l'extraordinaire repas. Au Danemark, selon le film, il fait froid et la nourriture est presque insipide. Par exemple, un des plats quotidiens est le pain sec trempé dans de la bière, acompagné de poisson. Les personnes sont simples et religieuses. Le Luthéranisme interdit beaucoup de choses: le vin et l'extravagance, par exemple. Le village est tranquille et froid, un lieu de rencontre pour cette communauté isolée. C'est visible que la communauté est âgée: dans le film, il n'y a pas d'enfants, ni personne qui joue, qui casse des choses, ou crie. L'absence des enfants donne un air de vieillesse et de discipline au village. C'est comme si l'enfance comme état physique n'existait pas. Une interpretation possible est que les membres de la congrégation sont comme des enfants, les enfants de Dieu.

Les deux visiteurs de cet endroit, le chanteur d'opéra Achille Papin, et le jeune soldat, Lorens Lowenhielm, se trouvent remplis de tristesse mais aussi d'espoir.[5] Le soldat visite le Jutland pour séjourner

chez une tante. Elle est membre de la congregation. Achille Papin visite le village parce qu'il cherche un endroit où rester. Les deux visiteurs sont uniques, et marquent la vie des personnages principaux. Avant l'arrivée de Babette, ils sont le seul lien entre le village et le monde séculier.

Les protagonistes principales sont deux soeurs très religieuses, Martina et Filippa. Leur père était le fondateur de la congrégation du village. Martina et Filippa sont toujours les objets d'admiration de la congrégation. Elles sont admirables, belles et charitables. Elles chantent comme des anges. Martina et Filippa se dévouent aux autres habitants du village. Le temps passe, la congrégation vieillit. Dans la congrégation la fraternité n'existe plus, à sa place il y a jalousie, hostilité, et aigreur.

Le temps passe lentement dans le village, mais maintenant les soeurs sont âgées. Une nuit de septembre 1871, pendant un orage, un chef français arrive: elle s'appelle Babette Hersant. Elle cherche un refuge, car elle veut échapper à la guerre civile en France. Babette arrive avec une lettre d'Achille Papin, le chanteur d'opéra. Il veut que les soeurs accueillent Babette. Encore une fois, à l'exemple d'Achille Papin, une Catholique cherche refuge auprès des soeurs dans leur village. Le fait que Babette arrive avec la tempête est significatif: il y a un parallélisme symbolique avec La Bible. Dans "The Semiotics of Food in the Bible" Jean Soler écrit: "A new era thus began after the Flood, a new Creation, which coincided with the appearance of a new dietary regime. 'Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything' (Gen. 9:3)."[6] Avec Babette, une nouveauté de possibilités culinaires arrive.

Babette reste avec Martina et Filippa, sans salaire mais avec sa dignité et la sécurité d'une auberge. Elle prépare les repas, la nourriture journalière des Danoises. Elle apprend à parler leur langue. Elle ne cuisine pas les plats français qu'elle aime. Le seul lien survivant entre Babette et la France est un billet de loterie qu'une connaissance achète pour elle annuellement.

La vie est calme. Entre la visite d'Achille Papin et l'arrivée de Babette, trente–cinq ans ont passé. Une autre fois, le passage du temps est presque imperceptible, mais quatorze ans passent entre l'orage et le festin. C'est comme si le spectateur était le seul qui se rendait compte du passage du temps dans le film.

Le film combine deux aspects essentiels pour l'existence d'une civilisation: la nourriture et la religion. Babette est un chef exceptionel, pas seulement parce qu'elle cuisine très bien, mais surtout parce qu'elle est une femme. La plupart des chefs sont des hommes, même aujourd'hui. Pour Babette, la cuisine est un art. Elle dit, dans le film, "An artist is never poor." Pour elle, la richesse est plus une qualité spirituelle que matérielle. Son art, la préparation des repas, combine les deux extrêmes. On peut dire que la nourriture est pour le corps et aussi pour l'esprit. *Le Festin de Babette* rehausse l'aspect spirituel d'un repas; et dans le film il est possible d'observer tous les éléments de la festivité.

La première caractéristique de la festivité est que c'est une occasion exceptionnelle, hors du commun. Les soeurs décident d'organiser un dîner pour honorer le centième anniversaire de la naissance de leur père. Elles pensaient préparer quelque chose de modeste et d'ordinaire pour la congrégation. Mais Babette propose une autre idée. Elle veut préparer un vrai repas français pour les soeurs et ses invités. Babette insiste: elle sait que l'anniversaire doit être une occasion exceptionnelle. Les soeurs hésitent, mais finalement acceptent la proposition du chef sans savoir exactement de quoi il s'agit.

Une autre caractéristique de la festivité est la spontanéité. Babette est créative dans sa préparation des plats. C'est un chef, pour elle la cuisine est la vie même. Préparer un repas est un art, une chose divertissante et passionnante, pas un travail pénible. Sa spontanéité fait un peu peur aux habitants conservateurs du village, mais sans la spontanéité du chef la festivité du dîner est incomplète.[7] L'élément de spontanéité sert à éliminer les doutes des habitants du village, et les remplace avec la bonté, comme on peut voir avec d'autres éléments de la festivité.

Par exemple, trouver le bon dans le mauvais est un élément important de ce concept. Comme on le sait, les habitants du village sentent que le festin de Babette est un signe de malheur et de décadence.[8] Mais après ils découvrent que grâce au dîner (et peut-être au vin!), ils peuvent se réconcilier et oublier leurs différences. Aussi, ils acceptent l'inévitabilité de la mortalité.

Le quatrième élément de festivité est la mise en valeur des arts libéraux, et non pas des arts serviles. Ici, il s'agit de l'art pour l'art, de l'art pour se divertir, pour l'enrichissement de la qualité humaine. Babette prépare un dîner extravagant pour donner quelque chose à manger, mais surtout parce que le procès créatif lui plaît. L'utilitarianisme n'a pas lieu ici. La cinquième partie du concept est similaire: le divertissement et le plaisir. Une situation agréable est essentielle à la festivité. Le repas est divertissant, pour le chef et aussi pour les invités.

La contemplation est l'élément qui rehausse le plus l'aspect spirituel de l'occasion. Le dîner est organisé à la mémoire du fondateur de la congrégation, le père de Martina et Filippa. La foi est importante, et le dîner engendre une ambiance décontractée et, peu à peu, confortable pour tous. Son effet est d'apporter de la joie aus visiteurs et d'assurer leur réconciliation et leur paix intérieure.

Le sacrifice est tout à fait visible dans le film. Babette a gagné à la loterie, un prix de dix mille francs. Elle a sacrifié tout l'argent gagné pour acheter et faire transporter les ingrédients, et pour préparer le repas. C'est aussi une action de reconnaissance de la charité des soeurs, et un désir de donner le bonheur aux autres comme résultat de sa bonne fortune.

L'excès, un autre élément des festivités, est representé aussi dans le film. Visuellement, la nourriture est attrayante. Pour le spectateur, c'est presque impossible d'imaginer que douze personnes peuvent manger tout ce qui leur est servi. Ce repas pour douze personnes coûte dix mille francs. Il y a des quantités inimaginables de vin, de fruits, de plats extravagants: caviar, cailles au sarcophage, et soupe de tortue. Les habitants du village considèrent que cet excès de nourriture exotique est un danger. Mais il y a aussi un excès d'amour et de

spiritualité, et les invités se rendent compte de cette réalité a la fin du repas.

Babette est sans doute motivée par l'amour et la gratitude quand elle prépare le festin. L'amour comme motivation est essentiel pour le concept du festin. Les habitants sentent aussi cet amour inconditionnel, et pardonnent leurs frères et soeurs de la congrégation.[9] Une dixième condition du festin est que le résultat soit le réjouissement. Dans *Le Festin de Babette,* la joie est visible. Les invités chantent ensemble, tous réconciliés.

Le rôle de la mémoire est subtil et essentiel. C'est la cause nécessaire de l'occasion, la motivation des soeurs, et un autre élément de la festivité. Le but initial du repas est de commémorer la naissance du père de Martina et Filippa et de raviver son souvenir. Cent ans après sa naissance, les soeurs et la congrégation célèbrent les leçons de leur guide spirituel.

L'affirmation du monde est le dernier élément de festivité selon Josef Pieper. Cet élément peut être résumé par les mots de Friedrich Nietzsche: "To have joy, one must approve everything."[10] Les participants du festin de Babette apprennent à apprécier la joie de vivre et à pardonner. Ils participent à un événement spirituel et physique. A la fin, ils n'ont pas peur des choses de la terre, car ces choses font partie de la vie. Ils acceptent leur mortalité et espèrent la vie eternelle.

> Et Jésus leur dit: Je suis le pain de vie. Celui qui vient à moi n'aura point de faim, et celui qui croit en moi n'aura jamais soif.[11]

END NOTES

1. Marc 7:14–15.

2. Pieper (1904–1997) était un penseur Catholique contemporain. Pendant cinquante ans il était maître de conférences à l'Université de Münster. Théologue et philosophe, il a écrit plusieurs livres et articles sur le sujet de l'éthique humaine.

3. "The Festivity of Babette's Feast," <http://www3.nd.edu/~fstegmai/page5.html> (9 December 1998).

4. Ibid.

5. "In essence we have this picture: The Protestants are strict and moral; they are an ascetic lot even. Their moral structure provides a compelling, albeit a little cold sometimes, attraction and haven for worn, beleaguered Catholics. Their zeal infects those who seek refuge, and goes back home with them." Jim Rogers, "Comment: Babette's Feast," <http://matrix.binary.net/krg/9302e.html> (10 December 1998).

6. Jean Soler, "The Semiotics of Food in the Bible," in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (New York: Routledge, 1997), 56.

7. "Que si quelqu'un des infidèles vous convie, et que vous y vouliez aller, mangez de tout ce qui est mis devant vous, sans vous en enquérir pour la conscience" (I Corinthiens 10:27).

8. "The congregation tell themselves that they will eat but they won't taste: they will protect themselves from the feast" (Rogers).

9. "Je sais, et je suis persuadé par le Seigneur Jésus, que rien n'est souillé de soi–même; mais cependant si quelqu'un croit qu'une chose est souillé, elle lui est souillé. Mais si ton frère est attristé de te voir manger d'une viande, tu ne te conduis point en cela par la charité. Ne détruis point par la viande celui pour lequel Christ est mort" (Romains 14: 14–15).

10. "The Festivity of Babette's Feast."

11. Jean 6:35.

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Experiencing the Spirit: Acknowledging the Spiritual in Anthropological Analysis

JENNIFER MULLAN

The Ritual Experience in the Field[1]

THE NIGHT WAS STARRY, spangled with thousands of stars visible through the clear country air. The water of Lake Anna lapped gently against the dock, and the candles flickered softly in the breeze. I stood behind my grandmother, my right hand on her shoulder and my left, palm upward, towards the sky. I was exhausted. For hours I had been praying, together with my family and friends, in a prayer circle. My mother was kneeling before her mom and dad, resting a hand on each of their knees. "Oh, Lord, you know that my parents are sitting here before you not to ask anything for themselves but to ask your blessing on my Aunt Marilyn, Mom's sister," Mom prayed. "They are so generous, Father, letting us come stay at their house; they are always willing to open their home to…whomever. They are so…" Mom shifts her weight, and her voice softly breaks as she swallows her tears, "so—good. So faithful." Her face was contorted with the depth of her prayer; she was completely focused on her prayer. "They come here, before You, with a request—not for themselves, though they deserve Your blessing for their hospitality and generosity, but instead they come here to pray for my mom's sister who is very sick."

Then Mom's tone shifted: "Lord, we believe You can do all things. You parted the Red Sea for Moses; You led the Israelites out of captivity; You healed the sick, raised the dead; You who are God become man. You died on the cross to show your love for us. You rose again

that we might believe in Your Divinity, and You have sent us the Holy Spirit that we might faithfully follow You and always know Your love, knowing Your strength and Your power." I looked around the circle to see the heads of my friends bowed, the whole circle holding hands or laying hands on each other. We were all connected through touch but also connected by the hours we had just spent praying for the Holy Spirit to enter each one of our lives. Unified in this Spirit, we attempted to focus the Spirit we felt among us to heal my Great Aunt Marilyn.

Aunt Marilyn is a nun in Denver, where she teaches at and is the principal of a Catholic school. She devotes herself to the school, running herself ragged with one project after another. She has the proverbial heart of gold; just being around her, you can sense the Peace of Christ radiating from her. She is greatly loved in my family.

For a long time Aunt Marilyn had been suffering internal pain, but only when she finally saw a specialist was a malignant tumor found in her kidney. The cancer was caught so late that her prognosis was not good. The operation to remove the tumor was scheduled for the next week. The doctors were not optimistic; they expected to find that the tumor had ruptured and the cancer had spread. They would remove the tumor, but Aunt Marilyn would have to have chemotherapy after the operation to try to kill whatever cancer was left. The doctors weren't sure how effective chemotherapy would be; there was just no knowing how bad the situation was until the operation. The sudden prospect of Aunt Marilyn dying, of losing the stability her gentle, soft-spoken holiness had provided for my family all these years, grieved all of us.

So we gathered this night, to call upon the God we felt present among us in this circle of prayer. We called upon Him to heal my aunt. I refocused my eyes on my mother's face and refocused my thoughts upon her words, and I tried to surrender my spirit completely to this prayer, to give over all my heart to the group's prayer. I prayed softly to myself, whispering in tongues, the "language of the Spirit." Mom's voice was soft and steady; she continued like a true

"prayer warrior": "We are unafraid to ask this great thing of You, Lord. You can do all things, for You are the Father, the Creator, our God. We are so blessed to have Your grace. We ask You, Father, that You touch my Aunt Marilyn, heal her. Take the cancer that lies within her away. And if not Lord—if this not be Your will—at least grant her Your peace to accept this suffering and to offer it up for Your glory. Grant us the serenity of mind to accept Your will, whatever it may be. But we ask Lord that—if it be at all possible, that You heal her. She has been faithful, Lord, and always an example—to me, to my mom, to all those around her—of how to be a true Christian. You know, Lord, that she has done nothing all her life but serve You. Please, bless Your servant now and take this illness from her. She has so much that she does, Lord, so much that she has left to do—please don't take her from us, but heal this cancer."

I glanced up again and caught the eye of my friend, Virginia, who was standing next to me. She squeezed my shoulder where she had been resting her hand. Next to her, Charlie, Virginia's brother, took my free hand in his and squeezed it. They were there with me, there for my family. They felt the pain in my heart, my mom's heart, my grandparents' hearts at the prospect of losing Aunt Marilyn. We all wanted so much for her to get well.

When Mom finished praying her prayer, she bowed her head and began praying in tongues. Mrs. Sullivan took a turn praying out loud, and when she finished, others from around the circle added their petitions on my aunt's behalf. My friends didn't know my aunt, but they prayed for her through me, my mom, and my grandparents: "God, please bless Jenny's aunt. She sounds like a really good person, and if you can take this cancer away from her—if it's Your will—please do. Mrs. Mullan and Jenny's grandparents would be very sad if you took her. She would be with You, and that would be good—but Lord, whatever is your will, let that be done."

All the prayers were heaped like a pile of flowers on my grandparents' heads. Grandma and Grandpa sat straight and erect in the center of our circle. They were not used to charismatic prayer, and in

fact are usually very wary of it. However, since Grandma's sister was so sick and since they believe in the power of the prayer of young people (because the young are held to be more innocent and so can communicate more intimately with God), they asked for our prayers and agreed to be prayed over in proxy for Aunt Marilyn. Grandma sat with her eyes closed and her hands neatly folded on her lap. Grandma's face was controlled, while Grandpa's was a bit more expressive, though he also sat with his eyes closed. When I stole a look at Grandpa, he seemed touched by the feeling in the circle. His head bowed, he looked humble and submissive.

Each petition offered was like a blossom in the crown of unity we presented before God the Father: "Father, our hearts are united. Please, for the sake of your servant, Marilyn, send out your blessing and make her well again." All of us deeply desired this miracle to occur. The communion of heart and spirit was an almost tangible presence in the circle. The air around us seemed thick with the pressure of that fervent desire. Even if no healing were to take place, ties were created between all those who participated in the prayer ritual. Everyone who participated was given the opportunity to grow spiritually—and most of those present took the opportunity, both that night and continuing afterwards.

Everyone was tired and worn out, but the crescendo of prayer built up from my mom's prayer to the prayer of others, to my final prayer. I offered up my words to the Father—words that I conceived through the prompting of the Spirit: "I claim Your mercy, Father. I claim Your grace and Your mercy for my Aunt Marilyn." My voice broke as I prayed, and I tried to keep from crying, but I could not stop the tears. No one seemed to mind my sniffling between sentences. "Let Your glory be shown in the healing of my aunt. There is nothing which You cannot do, and so I beg of You to heal your servant. Bind the cancer within her, and cast it out. Let your servant be restored to health." There were murmurs of agreement from around the circle. We all gripped shoulders and hands more closely, and we all leaned in a little bit closer, tighter. I felt my weight shift towards

the circle. My heart was so full, I thought I would explode into little shreds of joy at any second. "Glory to You, Lord God, for You have done mighty things; and glory to You, O Lord, for You will continue to do mighty things. All of us here believe You can heal Aunt Marilyn. Reach out Your Hand, Lord, and touch her. Let her know Your love; let it wash over her in healing grace. Let Your glory shine in her face; let her stand tall and healthy once again, O Lord. For You are generous to Your faithful servants." Again, murmurs—echoing prayers and refrains of "faithful, faithful"—came from the group. I went on: "Extend again, O God, Your grace. Lift Aunt Marilyn up, and let her be healed." A feeling of deep serenity filled me. I was sure that God heard my prayer, our prayer. I could only think then to thank God. "Thank You, O God, for whatever grace You bestow upon her, and thank You, Master of Light, for the grace even which You have poured out here among this small circle of Your people." I could sense that the group had spent all its energy, and I felt also that all my words were said. I ended my prayer by saying firmly, "In Jesus' name." Everyone replied, "AMEN." We all squeezed hands, and the circle broke up as we began milling about.

My grandparents stood up. My grandmother, stoic and steady as ever, thanked us all politely, but there was a catch in her voice that told me that she was deeply touched by the prayers. I heard the sound of people blowing their noses—many of us had been crying but had ignored runny noses to concentrate on praying. Grandpa wrapped his arm protectively around Grandma and added his thanks to the group: "Thank you, everyone, on behalf of myself, my wife and of course my sister-in-law. I'm sure God hears all your prayers. That was really"—he groped for the right word—"powerful, and I thank you for it." After escorting Grandma to the house, he returned and stoked up the bonfire he had built. My young friends and I gathered around the fire to roast marshmallows and make smores.

We huddled next to the fire, lying on our backs, staring at the stars. There was a meteor shower that night, and we watched the shooting stars as we talked. The tone of our conversation was different from normal. There were many more pauses and silences as ev-

erybody mulled over the events of the evening. There had definitely been "something" present when we were praying for each member of the group to be baptized in the Spirit and also during the healing prayer. I defined that "something" as the Holy Spirit. As we lay there, talking and looking at the stars, we were all digesting the experience.

A week later my Aunt Marilyn went in for surgery. To her doctor's astonishment, the malignant, long-undetected tumor was self-contained. The surgeon removed her kidney and the tumor, completely intact, with it. This meant that Aunt Marilyn, once she recovered from the surgery, had a clean bill of health; she didn't have to go through any post-operative "clean-up" chemotherapy. My family was thrilled, and my grandparents and mom were convinced it was the prayers of the group that night which had brought about such favorable results. My mom and my grandparents, convinced that God hears the voices of the young, spread the good news of Aunt Marilyn's health. My friends who had participated in the healing prayer service were excited to hear the good news, though a bit daunted by the idea that their prayers might have caused a "miracle." The fact remains that my aunt was completely healthy, and in the end, quite a few of those who shared in that evening of intense prayer found they could believe a miracle had taken place.

Interpreting the Ritual Experience

The ritual of laying on hands is an ancient Christian tradition. As Christ and the apostles laid hands on the sick to make them well (in mind or in spirit), so too do Christians today. A charismatic Christian healing ritual consists first and foremost of the laying on of hands and the formation of a prayer circle around the person being prayed for. Typically, people praying may speak in tongues, the "Language of the Spirit." The practice dates back to when the Holy Spirit first came to the apostles and they spoke in many languages. Tongues may sound like baby babble or it may take the form of an actual language—for instance, people who never learned to speak French have been known to pray in fluid French. Those present

in the prayer circle pray for the Spirit to heal the sick person; if the sick person is not available, someone may be prayed over in his or her place.

Consider my experience of this tradition in light of a typical anthropological definition of ritual: "a repetitive social practice composed of a sequence of symbolic activities in the form of dance, song, speech, gesture or the manipulation of objects, adhering to a culturally defined ritual schema and closely connected to a specific set of ideas that are often encoded in myth."[2] The Christian healing service meets this definition of ritual. It consists of a repetitive social practice composed of a sequence of activities: the laying on of hands and prayer, sometimes including song and gesture which are closely connected to the Christian conception of healing.

But to take the above account and reduce it to a structural anthropological analysis or a psychological case study would, in my opinion, leave out an important element of the analysis. While structural or psychological analysis can lead to important revelations about ritual in general, I am trying to achieve a different goal here. My goal is to present the ritual in its spiritual context and analyze the role that spirituality plays in the workings of the ritual. Furthermore, I would argue that all anthropologists who analyze rituals that contain a spiritual context have a responsibility to include a discussion of that context. Rather than disregarding the explanation of a ritual offered by the culture that practices it, anthropologists need to be open enough to consider the truth of their viewpoint, including the concept of real spirit activity.

These strong beliefs of mine stem from reading one of the works of anthropologist Edith Turner, *Experiencing Ritual.* In her book, she describes a spiritual experience of her own. She saw a spirit while participating in a Ndembu healing ritual called the Ihamba. Turner has long studied among the Ndembu, an African tribe living in Zambia. As far back as 1954 she and her husband, the well-known anthropologist Victor Turner, lived with the Ndembu.[3] He wrote several books about his experiences living and studying among the Ndembu, including a book about the Ihamba ritual, *The Drums of*

Affliction. But Victor Turner analyzed the ritual from a psychological perspective, focusing on "the social, on process, on performance."[4] He concentrated on the patient's psyche, the doctor's skills, the use of symbols, and "the social reintegration achieved by the lengthy curative process."[5]

In contrast, Edith Turner's book asks how the Ndembu view and experience the Ihamba. She relates her participation in two Ihamba rituals as an honorary doctor. At the end of the second ritual, she, along with her fellow Ihamba doctors, actually sees the Ihamba spirit. Her perspective gives credence to interpretations of ritual that go beyond traditional Western thinking. While she acknowledges the benefits of traditional anthropological analysis of ritual—like her husband's—she believes there is more to the ritual experience than that which traditional academic methods can explain.

Among the Ndembu, the Ihamba is performed to heal people who have the tooth of a deceased hunter running loose inside their body. The Ndembu truly believe a human tooth is inside the patient and is causing intense pain. By using ritual medicines, calling upon the spirit of the hunter whose tooth is inhabiting the victim, and finally sucking out the tooth through an antelope horn suctioned to a cut on the patient's skin, the ritual doctors remove the tooth and heal the patient.

Edith Turner saw the Ihamba spirit leaving the body of a patient and knew her conclusions would be different from those of fellow researchers:

> When in 1985 I returned to the Ndembu to restudy them, the two rituals of Ihamba affected me personally in a way that they had not before, culminating in the spirit experience; this event was unique for me and shed a new light on my research.[6]

She chose to present her account in a very personal fashion, relating her own thoughts, emotions and reactions, as well as the reactions of those around her. She gives a reflexive dramatic narrative account—postmodernist style. Unlike many earlier anthropologists who pre-

sented their ritual ethnographies as if they had witnessed the ritual from the outside, she describes her active role in the ritual to heal the patient, Meru, and readily gives voice to her personal spiritual experience:

> Clap, clap, clap—Mulandu was leaning forward, and all the others were on their feet—this was it. Quite an interval of struggle elapsed while I clapped like one possessed, crouching beside Bill amid a lot of urgent talk, while Singleton pressed Meru's back, guiding and leading out the tooth—Meru's face in a grin of tranced passion, her back quivering rapidly. Suddenly Meru raised an arm, stretched it in liberation, and I saw with my own eyes a giant thing emerging out of the flesh of her back. This thing was a large gray blob about six inches across, a deep gray opaque thing emerging as a sphere. I was amazed—delighted. I still laugh with glee at the realization of having seen it, the ihamba, and so big! We were all just one in triumph. The gray thing was actually out there, visible, and you could see Singleton's hands working and scrabbling on the back—and then the thing was there no more. Singleton had it in his pouch, pressing it in with his other hand as well. The receiving can was ready; he transferred whatever it was into the can and capped the castor oil leaf and bark lid over it. It was done.[7]

Turner believes that many anthropologists do not discuss the spiritual side of a ritual with any real credence in their academic writings. She believes that anthropologists who leave encounters with the spiritual out of their ethnographies, or dismiss them without exploring their meaning, are acting arrogantly or fearfully and are blindly restricting themselves in obedience to academic convention:

> When strange events did happen, as field subjects would sometimes give warning that they would, the anthropologist's reaction was often to stay quiet about them. The people themselves pointed to these events as significant, but most anthropologists did not take them in the same way. The fact that

> they themselves occasionally had something like the same experience did not seem to alter the case.[8]

Despite sometimes experiencing events that support the interpretation of the people they were studying, anthropologists often choose to interpret rituals solely from accepted academic anthropological perspectives. They ignore the significance of the people's explanation and even the significance of their own experiences. Turner objects to this idea that an anthropologist is better situated to interpret ritual than the members of the culture he or she is studying:

> A "hierarchy of authority" has been argued by some in academia who believe that trained anthropologists supposedly understand aspects of a culture better than the field subjects, but nowadays many have problems with this notion. Which world of logic is the correct one, theirs or ours? We are gradually discovering that there are as many logics as there are cultures, and we are encouraged at least to dialogue with them, if not adopt their way of thought.[9]

Turner represents a new school of anthropologists unwilling to say that their logic is better than the logic of the culture they are studying. Her book *Experiencing Ritual* is proof positive of her effort to enter into a dialogue with the Ndembu culture and understand Ndembu beliefs and conceptions of the Ihamba ritual.

I strongly agree with Edith Turner's conclusions. Building upon her work, I have given here a reflexive narrative account of a ritual in which I had a "spiritual encounter" of my own. Like Turner, I believe that this element of the ritual is very important and should not be ignored. I further agree that traditional methods of anthropological analysis are useful but that it is an oversight to include those methods of interpretation without also exploring the spiritual side of the ritual in question.

During the charismatic healing ritual, I felt the physical presence of a spirit uniting my family, friends and I as we prayed for my

Aunt Marilyn. We felt a deep sense of unity and power emanating from our prayer circle. For me, there was a feeling of being totally surrounded and embraced by a spirit. I have chosen to identify that spirit as the Holy Spirit, according to the beliefs of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement which provided the "cultural context" for my spiritual experience. I took the deep sense of peace I also experienced to mean that God heard the prayers of the group. I was unsure how He would answer, but it turned out that once her operation was completed, my great aunt was indeed freed from her cancer.

I acknowledge that my experience could be reduced to a special social bonding activity, and it could be considered a mere coincidence that my aunt's cancer ended up being contained; however, the feelings that I experienced during the healing ritual, as well as my religious beliefs, lead me to be open to the "illogical" interpretation that the Holy Spirit was present and He did work a miracle, even across all those miles from Lake Anna, Virginia to Denver, Colorado. My feelings were shared by my fellow participants in the ritual, and many of them concluded the same thing I did. As an anthropologist, I see it as my duty to report how I saw the ritual actually function. I believe that though spirits are not generally acknowledged as real, I still have a duty to respect at least the possibility of their existence in my anthropological analysis.

It is important to note my field experience differed from Edith Turner's in that my study took place in the context of a culture I belong to. Therefore, it is not the same stretch for me to acknowledge the spiritual element to my experience as it may have been for Turner, who was not Ndembu by birth and yet chose to participate in the Ndembu Ihamba ritual. I was born into a Catholic family, but I chose to become active in the Charismatic movement of the Church on my own. Not all Catholics believe in the power of laying on hands, but through personal experience I have come to believe in it. I chose to be open to the workings of the Spirit in the prayer circle we held for my aunt's healing. Even though the experience with my aunt was not the first time I had been exposed to this ritual, it reinforced my

faith that the Holy Spirit could be an active and present force in my life and the lives of others.

Furthermore, I support Turner's proposition of openness when it comes to interpreting ritual experience. I have also participated in Jewish and Native American rituals and have been cognizant of the presence of spirits during these rituals. In both cases, the participants maintained that good and bad spirits are at work throughout the world and in all cultures. I do not reject these views. Like Edith Turner, I believe that my own worldview can stretch to take into consideration the logic of other cultures. I do not believe that my culture alone has a monopoly on the truth. In terms of religion, yes, I believe mine is the total truth, but I also believe that other religions hold important elements of the truth. Therefore, I find it absurd to dismiss the spiritual rituals and actions of other cultures out-of-hand. They may prove to have much merit.

Turner concludes her book with a reflection on her attempt to be faithful to the spiritual element in Ihamba ritual. She explains that the Ihamba ritual goes "beyond the social context—though it needs the social for its soil and root system."[10] She relates her experience with the Ihamba to the religious world—but a different type of religious world:

> Thus we may be talking of a world of religion—but of another view of religion, not as morals, not as mental prayer, but in the form of ritual objects effective in their own right, a matter of spirits, and people with knowledge of them operating a ritual process that can actually be sensed.[11]

Edith Turner's experience with the Ihamba was a "matter of spirits," and she did sense something—rather she saw a spirit—when she went through the ritual process of the Ihamba. I, too, in my experience with the Christian prayer circle of healing participated in a world of religion. Through the ritual laying on of hands, of surrendering to the Spirit, the other participants and I felt the Spirit moving in our circle, working among us, influencing our prayers and our emotions.

As a result of my experience, I would argue for anthropologists everywhere to take into consideration the spiritual side of their experiences in the field—not only in rituals but in all experiences. I am not arguing that other methods of anthropological analysis should be abandoned. My argument is instead that all points of analysis should be considered: the symbolic, psychological, the functionalist, the environmental, and so forth, including the spiritual. As anthropologists, we have a responsibility to listen to those whose culture we are studying and give credence to their interpretations—after all, it is their culture. We cannot claim to be somehow wiser than the lifelong participants of the culture we have immersed ourselves in for temporary study. And while it is acceptable to step back from our own participation and discuss our observations, we should not hide our own reactions or involvement from our discussions and writings. We cannot say what the other individuals involved were feeling or thinking, but we can reveal our own thoughts and feelings. To undertake an intensive, comprehensive anthropological study, the anthropologist must use all of his or her resources. All methods of analysis, from the study of the power structure to the study of how spirits play a role in the society, should be used; all voices should be presented—the voices of informants through direct quotation and the voice of the anthropologist as well. Above all, we should resist the urge to place judgment on the cultures we study. We should dedicate ourselves to understanding them and portraying them as accurately as we can.

END NOTES

1. While the following description of a healing ritual is truthful, there was no tape recorder present. The quotations used in this narrative account, though true to the spirit of what was said, may not be completely accurate.

2. Emily A. Schultz and Robert H. Lavenda, *Cultural Anthropology: A Perspective on the Human Condition*, 4th ed. (Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing, 1998), 145.

3. Edith Turner et al., *Experiencing Ritual: A New Interpretation of African Healing* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 2.

4. Ibid., 15.

5. Ibid., 2.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., 149.

8. Ibid., 3.

9. Ibid., 4.

10. Ibid., 180.

11. Ibid.

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Lost Architecture

CHRIS KLIMAS

This story is about a man who was happy.

He had built himself a good life. He had been a good child, he had been a good student, and now he had a good job. He built buildings for people to live in. He understood how to keep gravity and rainstorms from tearing apart the place people called home.

"I am grateful to you," he told God when he prayed. "I am grateful for everything that you have given me."

When the man became forty years old, his two daughters died. Their names were forgotten. One was very young; the other had just entered middle school. They were short and graceful, and they were gone forever. They died bloodlessly. When their father sat with them in their deathbed, they did not recognize him. They asked him to bring their father.

It was difficult.

He continued doing his job because he thought it was holy, but he could not think of anything but the lost architecture of his daughters. He built doors that went into walls. Finally, he was told to take a vacation. Time, they thought, would heal him.

He had enough money to visit Neptune, though no one wanted to, and he did not build Neptune in his mind with chemicals. There weren't knights anymore, but if there were, he would have become one.

He quit his job of making things and became a trucker. He didn't tell his wife about this until he was 100 miles from his home, and he wouldn't tell her where he was. He called from a public phone booth that was on the side of a road that was shaped like a Möbius strip.

"But why?" his wife asked.

He hung up and kept driving. Speed is the most important thing to truckers. And time. Days, for him, were lines on a map. He stopped eating meals, and as food left him, he forgot his name. What he carried was more important than who he was. (But he did not know even this.)

He reached his destination, Chicago, but kept going. He drove further into the Midwest, with its long, straight lines. The roads were ordinary. When he slept (in the back of his cab, always), he dreamed of the endless road. He dreamed and hoped of a neverending path away from every city that ever existed.

It was on the 255th hour of his journey, at 2:55 A.M., nearly at the West Coast, when the road began to speak to him.

"Where are you going?" it asked.

"I can't see anything but the road," he replied. "And that's all I want to see."

"Your wife has been calling you all these days. She wants you to come home. Your life has not been torn from you."

"My wife is not my wife; my daughters are not my daughters."

But the road suddenly disappeared, and he realized that he was falling into a deep, deep canyon and that he would die. His truck twisted. The trailer smashed against a wall, and he knew that it had always been empty.

As the truck hit the ground, the ground pulled downward again. He fell 255 times. The ground refused him.

"You thanked God for what he had given you," the road told him. "But you did not thank him for what he took from you. If there was a reason why your daughters were taken, you wouldn't understand it."

The space around him bent and twisted until it too was a Möbius strip.

This story is about a man who became happy again.

He built buildings for people to live in. He understood how to keep gravity and rainstorms from tearing apart the place people called home. "I am grateful to you," he told God when he prayed. "I am

grateful for everything that you have given me." And then, when the man became forty years old, his two daughters died. When their father sat with them in their deathbed, they did not recognize him. They asked him to bring their father.

It was difficult.

He continued doing his job, because he thought it was holy, but he could not think of anything but the lost architecture of his daughters. He built doors that went into walls. He had enough money to visit Neptune, but he did not go there, and he did not build Neptune in his mind with chemicals. There weren't knights anymore, but if there were, he would have become one.

He would have become a knight because he went to his church and said this in his mind:

"I am grateful to you," he told God when he prayed. "I am grateful for everything that you have given me. And I am grateful for the things you take from me."

The words were difficult to pronounce correctly because it is hard to thank anyone for stealing your jewels. But he said the words as they should be said, and he went home to rebuild his lost architecture and fortify his home from the rainstorms.

Campaign Promise

BEN SCHIEK

If I were to die in Quito
I would order my body
be borne upon a llama's back
on a journey of the people,
on a journey of the pueblos.

When I am ready
I will descend the mountains from all sides,
spreading a story of love and hats,
gold and posters.
A crumbling cement wall,
a eucalyptus on the outskirts of town,
these are the things that will get me down,
and this is where my flesh will fester,
during long meetings with Atahualpa,
who will pet my llama and encourage me
not to be afraid to ask the people for their fedoras.

Some fedoras we'll have to steal at night
by cover of darkness.

I will tell the people who really loves them
and give them their hats back.
I will tell them who I am and who
is my llama.
Those who love me back will contribute their dirt
from all quarters

until I am completely buried,
an inane Pizarro.
Those who love me back will lose their homes
and starve in voteless silence.

Otherwise, my llama, whom I never owned,
would start galloping
and I'd fall off waving good-bye to the empty streets
with my whole body.

Desecration or Expression? The Presentation of a Nation's Artifact

JASON YERKIE

Introduction to the Question

LIKE NEARLY EVERY AMERICAN CHILD, I faithfully said the pledge of allegiance to the American flag every morning in school. When I was young, I really did not understand the purpose of this pledge; but now I realize that I was quietly and subtly internalizing the values of nationalism. By standing up and putting my right hand over my heart with my eyes focused on the flag, I was learning to venerate this national symbol. Along with being taught to assume that every American saluted the American flag, I was taught to assume that every American accepted the values we were learning and internalizing. I first became aware that this assumption was not completely accurate when I saw a picture of a man setting an American flag on fire in protest. This picture raised an important question: How can this person be an American if he burns (desecrates) the flag, a symbol of America? Clearly, considering the controversy surrounding the recent art exhibition at the Phoenix Art Museum, Old Glory: The American Flag in Contemporary Art, this question is still being asked by many people within our society. Since this question still looms unanswered perhaps we should reflect on the nature of the flag as a symbol.

Making a Statement with Old Glory

In spring of 1996, the Phoenix Art Museum presented a special exhibition entitled Old Glory: The American Flag in Contemporary Art. This exhibition featured eighty-one works of art in a variety of media that "span[ned] five decades of American art, haplessly lumped

together solely by virtue that all of it depicts—in some way, shape or form—the American flag."[1] Included in the exhibition were works by some of the most important artists of the twentieth century: Jasper Johns, Claus Oldenberg, Larry Rivers, and Edward Kienholz. David Rubin, the curator of contemporary art at the Phoenix Art Museum, brought this exhibition together in 1994 while he was a curator at the Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art.

Even though the exhibition elicited no controversy when it was displayed several years earlier in Cleveland and Colorado Springs, the exhibition stirred tremendous controversy, locally and nationally, when it was displayed in Phoenix. According to museum director Jim Ballinger, most of the controversy centered around the way two works displayed the flag: Dread Scott's *What is the Proper Way to Display the U.S. Flag* (1988) and a re-construction of Kate Millet's *The American Dream Goes to Pot* (1970). In Scott's work the American flag is placed on the floor in front of the exhibit's guest book, and in Millet's work the American flag is draped over a toilet. It is interesting and important to note that both of these works were created in reaction to governmental censorship of other artists, which Scott and Millet felt was un-American. So one might argue that their desecration of the flag was a statement of nationalism.

To many patriots and veterans, these works desecrate the flag. As a past department member of the American Legion described, "Two million members of the American Legion and the twenty-six million living veterans in our country did not fight and lay their lives on the line in the great wars so that obscenity and desecration of our flag could be provided at public expense."[2] Several times protesters of the exhibition removed flags from these works, and one protester who struggled with a museum security guard over a flag said, "That's my flag and I'm going to defend it. No son of a bitch is going to [let the flag drape from a toilet]."[3] Angry local protesters also began calling their municipal representatives and state legislators and representatives to try to get the exhibition shut down, but these attempts proved unsuccessful.

Besides receiving condemnation from many local conservative politicians and veterans' groups within Arizona, the exhibition also

received condemnation from the then Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, and presidential candidate Bob Dole, forcing the exhibition into the national media spotlight. Reacting to the condemnation, Ballinger noted that "[o]nce people have a chance to see the entire exhibit, I think that will help them understand...The artists here are just celebrating their First Amendment rights."[4] Curiously, neither Gingrich nor Dole visited the exhibition personally, yet the attention they gave the exhibition helped to draw a larger audience than the museum's officials had anticipated.

The Controversy Considered

The controversy over this exhibition helps to reveal the nature of nationalism: it is an ideology. Like any other ideology, nationalism is subject to different interpretations of its symbols, ideas, and doctrines; there may be conflicting interpretations which all claim to be the "real," "true," or "pure" versions. This conflict is clearly seen in the Old Glory exhibition: many individuals think the flag should never be desecrated because it is sacred, while other individuals think the flag may be used in any manner because it is a symbol. Clearly, a nationalist ideology gives meaning to the flag, but how is this meaning given to the flag, and why do so many people venerate the flag? In answering these questions I will consider Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis of symbols in *Mythologies* in conjunction with Benedict Anderson's interpretation of the nation as an imagined community in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*.

National Symbol as Myth

Obviously, the protesters of the Old Glory art exhibition believe the American flag is more a than simple representation of the United States of America. To them, the flag embodies and represents the spirit and ideals of the nation. Thus, we begin to understand why the protesters were upset with the desecration of the flag in the two

pieces: desecrating the flag means desecrating the nation. But how is the flag able to possess both the simple and more complex meanings? In order to answer this question, we will consider Barthes' understanding of myth. According to Barthes, "Myth is a type of speech. . . [meaning] a mode of signification, a form . . . [which is] not defined by the object of the message, but by the way in which it utters this message."[5] The myth "utters" its message through common symbols or signs of language, but it gives them different meanings or signification which do not appear simultaneously.

For Barthes, a symbol of language can be analytically deconstructed into two components: a signifier and a signified. [6] The signifier is the material of the symbol or sign that allows a certain idea or concept to be expressed or signified. Together the signifier and signified create a unique and distinctive sign.[7] For example, the red, white and blue fabric put together in the appropriate manner is the signifier, the United States of America is the signified, and together they create the American flag, the sign. Thus the sign comes into being as the simultaneous representation of form and meaning. Barthes calls language the first-order semiological system because it is the fundamental form of speech. The second-order semiological system or the myth begins where the first-order system ends, with the sign.

Like the sign in language, the myth is composed of two aspects: the signifier and the signified. Unlike the signifier of the sign in the language, the signifier of the myth already possesses its own meaning. Since the myth's signifier possesses its own meaning, it must be emptied before the myth's concept or idea may be expressed. By emptying the sign of its meaning and placing a new meaning on the sign, the myth is created. In the second-order semiological system, the American flag's first-order meaning, the representation of the United States of America, is emptied, changing the flag into a signifier that can relate a second signification. This second signification, the spirit of America, is then given to the flag. With this second signification the flag becomes a myth.

Reworking The Myth

All the artwork in the Old Glory exhibition explored the complex nature of the flag's meanings. By using the flag, these pieces force us to question and to explore the flag's significance as we interpret the artist's work. Through our own explorations of the flag's meanings, we may begin to rework the myth's significance and begin to critically examine our own understanding of nationalism. Even though we understand how the flag works as a symbol which encompasses several meanings and we know that nationalism creates this second meaning, we must consider how nationalism functions to create this widely accepted meaning.

Reflections on Nationalism

As noted earlier, nationalism is an ideology which bases itself on the concept of nation. According to nationalism, the nation is a clearly identifiable entity, but when we try to describe or to define this entity by the properties that different nationalist groups argue establish nations—such as language, ethnicity, and religion—we cannot establish an adequate definition that applies to all nations. Since we do not have a clear definition of the nation, the entire basis of nationalism is in peril. So before we may begin to consider nationalism, we must try to establish a definition of the nation outside the language of nationalism.

According to Anderson, a nation "is a political community—and imagined both inherently limited and sovereign."[8] He argues that nations are imagined communities because even though no member of any nation will ever "know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them…in the minds of each lives the image of their communion"[9] as a deep sense of "horizontal comradeship."[10] It is "imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations."[11] And

while being imagined as limited, the nation is also considered sovereign because the concept of nation evolved during a time when dynastic realms were being destroyed in the name of freedom and reason; thus "[t]he gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state,"[12] a state which has the power to determine its own destiny. Clearly, this definition is broad enough in scope to include all the different uses of the word "nation," yet it defines and reveals what type of social grouping a nation entails: an imagined community that is limited and sovereign. From this definition we realize that there must be a set of shared experiences that allow individuals to form this cohesive imagination.

When we reflect on our society and the role of mass media, we realize that every day we are establishing and reinforcing this set of shared experiences. The interpretation and internalization of these shared experiences helps to create the ideology of nationalism. In order to ease the acceptance of nationalist ideology, symbols and icons such as the flag are given special meanings—second-order semiological meanings. So we may conjecture that these shared experiences influence and shape the mythological meanings.

This development of nationalism and its symbols is seen in the veterans' and their families' protest against the Old Glory exhibit's alleged desecration. These veterans and their families shared the traumatic and life-altering experience of war, and in war, symbols like the flag are extremely important because they define a soldier's enemies and friends, and they remind the soldiers what they are fighting to protect. Since war is so traumatic, frequently veterans never change or alter their understanding of the war's symbols. Therefore, when individuals desecrate or misuse one of these war symbols, veterans become upset and react in protest. But there are others who did not share the experience of war; thus the flag may have a different meaning for them.

One group which had a different interpretation of the flag were those individuals who protested America's involvement in Vietnam. To show their anger with the government's policy, they burned flags.

They burned the flag because they believed that the government's involvement in the Vietnam negated the nationalist ideals which the flag represented. Therefore, they did not think that they were desecrating the flag; rather, they believed the government's actions had already desecrated the flag and left it without meaning. They thus used the mythology of the flag to save the nation by influencing public policy.

Conclusion

From this examination, I think we now realize that when we consider the complex meaning of the American flag, we are also examining the concept of nationalism and the nation. Since nationalism is one of the most important ways we identify ourselves in the modern times, it is necessary for us to understand how it develops and functions. If art exhibits like Old Glory prompt us to examine national symbols, they also help us to understand who we are with regard to our national identity.

END NOTES

1. Kate Vanesian, "Déjà Wow: Red, White, and Snooze," <http://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/1996/040496/art1.html> (11 December 1998).

2. CNN news report, <www.cnn.com/US/flag_exhibit/index.html> (11 December 1998).

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Wang and Hill, 1998), 109.

6. Barthes considers "language, discourse, speech, etc., to mean any significant unit or synthesis, whether verbal or visual...even ob-

jects will become speech, if they have meaning"(111); therefore, any verbal or visual image may be considered a sign.

7. Barthes notes that the signifier and the signified do not exist independently from each other and are only separated for the purpose of analysis (114).

8. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. and extended edition (New York: Verso, 1991), 5.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., 7.

11. Ibid., 6.

12. Ibid., 7.

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Sueños

TATIANA GIRALDO

I
Cascadas de sangre veo en mis sueños.
Torrentes de llanto mojan mis pechos
Y lavan el rojo que tiñe mi cuerpo.
Deseo escapar al azul sin fondo,
Al descanso eterno del amor sin freno,
Sentir el choque de los cuerpos térreos
Cansados de sufrir el dolor ajeno.

II
Mi cuerpo se transporta al sin tiempo.
Las notas, los cueros, el cuerpo entero
Arden juntos al convertirse en fuego.
Ahora sólo soy movimiento.
Mi único dueño me duevuelve al tiempo,
Acaba la música y muero.

III
Una serpiente recorre mi cuerpo
Lame el sudor de los poros abiertos,
Penetra cada recóndito hueco
Para poder expulsar el olor del miedo.
Mis labios se abren ante el estruendo,
ante la muerte que está al acecho.

The Beast's Lair: Thoughts on the Distortion of American Representation

JOLENE LEHR

IN A CULTURE that emphasizes the importance of first impressions, one of the first things Americans notice about one another is their bodies: the physical, imageatic representation of themselves. Americans crave an ideal standard for this "body representation"—the cookie-cutter for the dough. Identifying with this model is a way to envision ourselves fitting into the culture we, paradoxically, laud as diverse. The concept of an "All-American" standard is nebulous at best; America, the "melting pot," cannot possibly contain 268 million white, upper-class, white-collared, svelte individuals with "perfect" European good looks—the dominant icon which an image-based culture has disseminated via socio-organizational constructs, not the least of which is media.[1] Messages taken from the social environment can significantly alter one's self-perception and personal esteem, particularly when one does not fit the model perpetuated by American myths concerning beauty, power and identity.

The danger of this American emphasis on the body is Hydraean: we worship physical perfection, we identify with our bodies more than our minds, we equate a "bad" body with a "bad" soul. We unfairly judge ourselves and others based mostly, or exclusively, on appearances, using a random, subjective standard concocted by a prejudicial hierarchy. Some people lose to this hierarchy and are shuffled off into lower categories according to stereotypes associated with their outward appearance: he is "of color," and is therefore assumed to be uneducated, dim-witted and lazy; she is "fat," and therefore considered degenerate, slobby, greedy. The subjugated individuals feel allured to contort their physical selves to emulate the model, often to

their physical, emotional and mental detriment. The outcome is inevitably negative: individuals lose a secure sense of individuality, which, arguably, *is* the American ideal. In a nation which is constitutionally obligated to protect freedom and voice, abnegating these human rights can render an American defenseless and devoid of true identity.

This form of oppression has fueled our fires of self-hatred. By analyzing ourselves in terms of parts (what parts are good or what parts bad), we dangerously associate this dehumanization with self-worth and value to society. For the majority of people who do not or cannot meet the standard, self-destruction and self-sacrifice become their mode of achieving a sense of worth. They might also feel an obligation to "better" themselves by conforming to the ideal, so as to further the cause of a race, gender or creed. As the body becomes a political or personal statement these deconstructive-reconstructive tendencies delete the concept they have of themselves. They have broken themselves down into dissociated parts with intent to build a new (unfeasible) model, and in the midst of surgery, they have become distended from what they started with—they cannot successfully progress forward, and, sadly, are in danger of permanently obscuring the pathway back to their original, authentic self. In the attempt to discover a "better" self, they have lost themselves in a dark lair where several predatory mythical beasts trap disillusioned victims.

All subverted individuals, no matter how they are unfairly categorized (too black, too fat, too aged, etc.) share a common bond: they are slaves to a self-destructive compulsion that strips them of a sanguine identity as they try to achieve an imaginary ideal. In light of this commiseration, the reader can see an image-paranoia that stretches beyond initially perceived barriers of gender, race, sexuality and heritage. Americans of every shape, color, sexual preference and social class are prone to express disenchantment with their physical representation of themselves and the ramifications of this self in modern society.[2] Acknowledging our common distemper unifies us in the battle against the ideal that obscures the true goal of American

existence: freedom of individuality. Not until we cease to be pitted against ourselves and each other in this "Beasts' Lair" can we accolade ourselves as a functionally coalescent culture.

*

Autobiographical literature can offer an agenda to this argument when the authors recount how they overcame personal ordeals concerning their physical self-representation. In several examples of African-American literature, for instance, I have noted the authors' references to an unhealthy attitude they entertained regarding their physical selves and how they survived self-destructive impulses. For example, in Malcolm X's *Autobiography*, Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, and April Sinclair's novel *Coffee Will Make You Black*, the characters tell stories of dissatisfaction with their minority bodies and with their low social status resulting from their racial demarcations. Because we commonly accept the idea that racial prejudice elicits self-hate among a subjugated race, the authors' depictions of hair-straightening and conking, comparing skin color, "passing," and bleaching come as no great surprise when the reader considers how restrictive it was to be black. Yet still deliberated today are other forms of prejudice, such as those involved with the beauty myth, which teaches Americans, particularly women, that cosmetic attractiveness determines self-worth. The trials the African-Americans put themselves through to fix their racially-determined features are a process similar to the mental and physical duress the women authors undergo in Patricia Foster's compilation, *Minding the Body: Women Writers on Body and Soul*: acid-peeling wrinkles, frosting hair, dieting to oblivion.

In her introduction to *Minding the Body*, Patricia Foster offers an overview of what drove her to seek commiseration from her peer writers regarding these myths.

> Growing up I thought that enhancing and improving the body was synonymous with elevating the self.... If I have struggled all of my life to make peace with my body, to achieve some

> equilibrium between cultural expectation and reality, am I alone, or are there other[s] who have felt imprisoned by culture, who have found no other way to speak except through the body?[3]

In one of the most powerful moments in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Angelou describes the oppression she experienced under these myths: "The Black female is assaulted in her tender years by all those common forces of nature at the same time that she is caught in the tripartite crossfire of masculine prejudice, white illogical hate and Black lack of power."[4] Foster displays similar disdain for the maturation process: "I did not want to be female. I was terrified of the demands on my sex for perfection and conformity."[5] In another instance in the anthology, Nancy Mairs states plainly, "I was never a beautiful woman, and for that reason, I've spent most of my life (together with at least 95 percent of the female population of the United States) suffering the shame of falling short of an unattainable standard."[6] Malcolm X admits that he didn't have much feeling about being a Negro, because he "was trying so hard, in every way [he] could, to be white."[7] With simple wordplay the gel in which all these sentiments coagulate becomes solid: One didn't have much feeling about being human because she was trying so hard, in every way she could, to be skinny, or, another did not want to be Black, terrified of the demands on his race for conformity.

We must ask ourselves how much compromise should be involved; how far should we open ourselves to distorting our self-image into terms of worth? Is dyeing (or straightening) our hair to fulfill "blonde ambition" only a step away from dieting (starving) ourselves to death? Is it the same Beast that told these black authors their skin was too dark and hair too curly—is it this Beast that tells a new generation that our only hope of salvation lies in striving to become something we are not: younger, prettier, thinner, taller, stronger? The link between abhorring one's racially-determined bodily features and hating "extra" flesh or "unpretty" body parts is strong when seen in the context that this phenomenon is the result of indi-

viduals being oppressed by myths lurking in modern society.[8] In her article "A Weight That Women Carry: The Compulsion to Diet in a Starved Culture," Sallie Tisdale sums up "perception-oppression" as she struggles to understand the thin-obsession she and others labor under: "In trying to lose weight, we've lost hope of simply being seen for ourselves. Each of us in this culture, this twisted, inchoate culture, has to choose between battles: One battle is against the cultural ideal, and the other is against ourselves."[9]

Writers in *Minding the Body* marvel at how regressive our attitudes have become in dealing with self-esteem entangled with physical self-perception. Foster comments regarding the women's movement:

> [J]ust beneath the surface of this surge of freedom, there existed side pockets of perversion, ways of restricting the self that were subtly encouraged within culture.... [S]ome of us made a U-turn, finding a unique way to subvert ourselves. At age 24, I became anorexic, sliding smoothly into that abyss of illusionary control where thinness is the speedometer of the mind.... [I]t has taken me years to understand how my own culture has constructed myths that have denied women power over and respect for our bodies and have repressed the urge to speak.[10]

Loss of control to the Beast is the main ingredient in all these mangled self-perceptions. For example, as Malcolm X—a forceful, mature, demagogic black man—pours lye on his hair to achieve a whiter, more fashionable look, his apparent opposite, Foster—a young, middle- to upper- class white girl—anorectically starves herself to also achieve a more fashionable look; they are both attempting to please the Beast. Many modern theories of anorexia, an affliction which is perhaps the epitome of self-distortion, claim that the thin-obsession spins off from the victim's loss of control over his/her personal life. In response to the fact that many patients' anorexia stems back to the onslaught of puberty, one study proclaims that their "changing bodies during adolescence [are] completely out of their control and may result in feelings of confusion, fear, or power-

lessness. Denying feelings of hunger may be one area in which they are winning, gaining control or power."[11] In reaction, Peggy Claude-Pierre, head of an anorexia clinic, states concerning her patients: "The lessons they need to learn—that no one can be perfect, that perceptions are not reality, that unconditional love can vanquish the negative mind-set that tortures victims—are lessons for us all."[12] This certainly is a lesson for us all—whether we slave under perceptions of race-worth, beauty-worth or sexuality-worth. Fed by any myth, self-destruction robs people of their true voice. For these authors, once that voice is recovered, they can reclaim their identity, lead fuller lives comfortable with their individual natures, and tell their tale of self-distortion to warn others of the Beast's Lair.

The authors' anguish first buds when they acknowledge the dissension between their exterior and interior worth. Aware that she falls short of the standard, Angelou craves to be identified with white characteristics because she feels she is internally worthy of a more valuable exterior:

> Wouldn't they be surprised when one day I woke out of my ugly black dream, and my real hair, which was long and blonde, would take the place of the kinky mass that Momma wouldn't let me straighten? My light-blue eyes were going to hypnotize them.... Because I was really white and because a cruel fairy stepmother, who was understandably jealous of my beauty, had turned me into a too-big Negro girl, with nappy black hair, broad feet and a space between her teeth that would hold a number-two pencil.[13]

She admires her younger brother Bailey's sleek beauty and the "tame hair" that other girls have.[14]

Sinclair also contributes a significant portion of her book to uncovering the phenomenon of racial-feature hatred. Sinclair's main character, Stevie, is somewhat hesitant to appreciate unreservedly her own color because, "[M]ost Negroes [don't] get excited over folks who are darker than a paper bag," she says while studying her reflection in a pitcher of Kool-Aid.[15] In response to the mantra "BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL" graffitoed on a building-side, Stevie comments,

"Maybe he [the graffitist] just got out of the asylum." Her mother contests that the last thing anybody would want to be is black.[16]

Malcolm X also highlights white aspirations, fueled by different control systems, in his peers and in himself. He pegs Christianity, educational systems and city-life as brainwashing his peers with:

> ...the pitiful misapprehension that it would make them 'better'...to imitate white people.... It taught him to hate everything black, including himself. It taught him that everything white was good, to be admired, respected, and loved. It brainwashed this 'Negro' to think he was superior if his complexion showed more of the white pollution of the slavemaster.[17]

Malcom X charges: "The ignorance we of the black race here in America have, and the self-hatred we have, they are fine examples of what the white slavemaster has seen fit to teach us." [18]

On the beauty myth's end of the argument, an aging Doris Grumbach comments in her story, "Coming into the End Zone":

> In my younger years, I remember that I enjoyed feeling the firmness of my arms and legs, neck and fingers, chin and breasts.... Now I look, hard. There is nothing lovely about the sight of me. I have been taught that firm and unlined is beautiful. Shall I try to learn to love what I am left with? It would be easier to resolve never again to look into a full-length mirror.[19]

They all recognize the model and realize they do not fit it. Consequently, they pine after others' features as though attainment would grant complete personal fulfillment. A person constrained in this category of "missing parts" could hypothetically empathize with his/her subjugated peers. Angelou expresses this commonality when she extends warmth to two other factions: the "crippled" through her uncle, and the "downtrodden, misunderstood lesbians" through her literary investigations.[20] Angelou says she felt closest to her physically-challenged uncle when he once attempted to masquerade his

disability which she imagines to tire him "as prisoners tire of penitentiary bars and the guilty tire of blame."[21] Angelou understands the blight, since she herself is burdened by her negative perceptions of her gender, color, features and physical presence.

Such negative perceptions create the urge to reconstruct. Porter writes in light of her teenage quest for a pair of disco jeans which would never fit properly over her black figure:

> There is something natural about...beginning the search, doing some disassembling, examining themselves part by part, and then reconstructing themselves. When I was younger...I thought there was truly some magic piece to be found somewhere in the beast's castle, like a pair of jeans, that would make me complete.[22]

The urge to reinvent the self to incorporate these "magic" parts is a prominent theme throughout all of the texts.

Perhaps Malcolm's magic is in his hair. In *Autobiography*, he goes to great lengths to depict the indignities involved with "conking" or straightening his hair to achieve a "whiter" look. Allow me to summarize the painful scenario as Malcolm's friend Shorty lays on Malcolm's first conk:

> 'So you know it's going to burn when I comb it in—it burns bad. But the longer you can stand it, the straighter the hair'.... When I get to washing out your head, be sure to tell me anywhere you feel any little stinging,' Shorty warned me.... 'You always got to remember that any congolene left in burns a sore into your head.'... The congolene just felt warm when Shorty started combing it in. But then my head caught fire.... I gritted my teeth and tried to pull the sides of the kitchen table together. The comb felt as if it was raking my skin off.... My eyes watered, my nose was running. I couldn't stand it any longer; I bolted to the washbasin.... The flame came back as Shorty, with a thick towel, started drying my head, rubbing hard.... My first view in the mirror blotted out the hurting. I'd seen some pretty conks, but when it's the first time, on your own head, the transformation, after the lifetime of

> kinks, is staggering.... On top of my head was this thick, smooth sheen of shining red hair as straight as any white man's.[23]

The reader is not allowed to linger very long on this seeming triumph, however, as Malcolm the narrator immediately rushes into retrospectively rebuking his self-destructive behavior:

> How ridiculous I was! Stupid enough to stand there simply lost in admiration of my hair now looking 'white.' This was my first really big step towards self-degradation: when I endured all that pain, literally burning my flesh to have it look like a white man's hair. I had joined that multitude of Negro men and women in America who are brainwashed into believing that the black people are 'inferior'—and white people 'superior'—that they will even violate and mutilate their God-created bodies to try to look 'pretty' by white standards.[24]

Malcolm proceeds to excoriate the trend among his race, citing black women who wear ridiculous wigs of every rainbow color and men who habitually conk their hair. He states: "I don't see how on earth any black woman with any race pride could walk down the street with a black man wearing a conk—the emblem of his shame that he is black.... It makes you wonder if the Negro has completely lost his sense of identity, lost touch with himself."[25] Indeed arguably he had, and intentionally at that.

In *Minding the Body*, "Fighting Natural" by Lynne Taetzsch corresponds remarkably to Malcolm's focus on hair. Taetzsch's story documents her continual torturing of her dirty blonde hair: "I had nowhere to put my rage. So I took it out on my hair."[26] In a rhetoric similar to Malcolm's attention to detail, Taetzsch explains the process of getting a frosting on her hair:

> First, the operator squeezes your head into a tight plastic cap filled with tiny holes. Then he takes a gadget like a crochet needle, jabs it into a hole, grabs a clump of hair, and pulls it out.... Even the most gentle operators with no sadistic tendencies can't help but jab the needle into your scalp and pull

> your hair when they drag it through the holes.... Mike mixes a paste of bleach and rubs it thoroughly into all the hair sticking out of the cap. I squeeze my eyes shut in reaction to the fumes.... I have endured frostings that took all day, that hurt me so much I cried, that came out in globby patches or missed whole sections of my head or that were so subtle I couldn't tell I had had my hair frosted at all and had to go have it done again.[27]

The significance behind the comparison lies in Taetzsch's explanation as to why she feels compelled to alter her hair:

> The Clairol treatment has been a kind of purging for me, a tearing out of my old life so that I might look in the mirror and see a new person, find a new life, a way to be in the world that worked this time. Perhaps if I could look in the mirror and see someone else, this life wouldn't really be happening to me. The point is that after you wash out all the smelly gunk and dry your hair, you look into the mirror for that jolt, that shock, the hope that this change would finally do it.[28]

She confesses: "I don't have enough clout yet to just be me."[29]

The reconstruction works on two levels: personal and political; Taetzsch asks, "Do I have to frost my hair? Should I not frost my hair? Does it matter personally or politically?"[30] After his religious conversion, Malcolm explains that one of the first steps a Muslim convert must take is to shed himself of the self-deprecatory conk. "He will discover, just as I did, that he will be much-improved mentally whenever he discovers enough black self-pride to have that mess clipped off, and then wear the natural hair that God gives black men to wear."[31] Obviously, hair, on top of the head or on the chin, is an important personal and political statement for Malcolm. He uses hair as a metaphor to show the connection between a black person's representational display and their inner esteem.

Sinclair illustrates this dichotomy as well when her main character deliberates wearing a "natural" or enduring the straightening comb or perm. The issue is charged with importance beyond mere aestheticism. Sinclair's character, Mrs. Walker, an "uppity Negro" as

Malcolm would say, claims that the straightening comb, a tool of assimilation, is the most important thing to happen to the black race—even more important than the civil rights movement.[32] When Stevie protestingly comments that her teacher supports black women's right to wear their hair natural as the white women can, the "brainwashed" women reply that Stevie's teacher will probably marry a blonde. In the beauty parlor, formerly named "No Naps" and renamed "Watu Wazuri" (Beautiful People), the use of scorching straightening combs and lye-based perms is justified by one character's comment: "You gotta pay a price for beauty, honey," while another character points out the techniques' suppressive undertow: "Seem like black folk gotta pay more for everything."[33] Caught inside her personal adolescent strife in an era of historical eruption, Stevie shapes her attitudes toward oppression with every decision concerning her physical appearance. Once she recognizes the metaphorical significance behind the women's attempts to become "whiter" through various painful methods, she decides to wear her hair naturally, choosing to display outwardly her loyalty to her race.

The politics involved in these types of decisions correspond to faulty modern perceptions of overweight people, Tisdale would argue. "Brainwashed people" believe that the "fat person's character flaw is a lack of narcissism. She's let herself go."[34] Stevie's mother is concerned over her daughter's seeming disinterest in taking "opportunities to better" herself. When Stevie refuses to use bleaching creams on her face, her mother caustically tells her, "You deserve to end up like a nobody, like your father!."[35] Her mother encourages her to "see yourself the way others see you.... I know that black is supposed to be beautiful, but you use these bleaching creams.... Just in case it's a fad and people go back to thinking the way they've always thought."[36]

Another writer in the anthology, Patricia Stevens, caves in to a similar temptation. She becomes obsessed with wrinkles above her lip, and finally concedes to frying them off with an acid peel. Her first attempts to claim a "miracle" result in a severe reaction.[37] Stevens recalls in "Stiff Upper Lip": "It burned and tears ran out of my eyes,

but I didn't flinch. After all, I was choosing this. It wasn't the same as going to the dentist and having a tooth drilled."[38] Concerning this balance of narcissism, Tisdale comments, "I looked in the mirror and saw a woman with flesh, curves, muscles, a few stretch marks, the beginnings of wrinkles.... 'd known for so long, that my body wasn't all right this way. I was afraid to act as though I were all right: was afraid that by doing so I'd be acting a fool. ...I've got to do something about myself."[39]

Finding the right balance between too much and not enough narcissism is a paradox in the myth. If one doesn't become absorbed in fulfilling the myth's demands, one will be chastised by proponents of the Beast (often those who are in power above the subjugated); however, serious consequences, in addition to the frustration, are evident from the self-torture exacted by meticulous dedication to pleasing the Beast.

Furthermore, the myth's dynamics can taint interpersonal relations, even among the subjugated peers. For instance, Stevie associates with the Charisma group which plans to treat a girl "like dog mange" because of her choice to wear her hair naturally.[40] Pam Houston, author of "Out of Habit, I Start Apologizing," writes: "I am walking down the street in Manhattan, Fifth Avenue in the lower sixties, women with shopping bags on all sides. I realize with some horror that for the last fifteen blocks I have been counting how many women have better and how many women have worse figures than I do. Did I say fifteen blocks? I meant fifteen years."[41] Obviously, this Iago of a Myth desires destruction not only of the self but within the faction, as well. In response to a girl who gets teased for her natural hairstyle, Stevie's friend, Roland, comments, "The white man has really done a job on us. We'll never be free until we stop hating ourselves."[42]

"We'll never be free until we stop hating ourselves," says the feminist. "We'll never be free until we stop hating ourselves," says the obese person. Says the anorexic. Says the minority. The homosexual. Handicapped. Says the non-wealthy, non-healthy, non-male, non-white, non-straight, non-corporate American.

"Keep hating yourselves," says the hungry Beast.

"Speaking out loud is the antidote to shame," writes Mairs.[43] All of these authors have latched on to this cure, in addition to absolving themselves of the burden to assimilate to the pervasive "ideal." As Malcolm dissolves hate and self-deprecation into his passion for the Muslim nation and human rights, Angelou matures in her self-identity as a competent mother, and Sinclair's character resigns her fears of her possible "abnormality" to concern herself with the power she will require in "blooming" as whatever she is. All authors experience an epiphany: realizing the beauty of self-appreciation which transcends physical demarcations. They have subverted their dead-end loyalty to the myth into more productive efforts, thereby restoring their healthy sense of self. The no-longer dieting Tisdale writes:

> By fussing endlessly over my body, I've ceased to inhabit it. I'm trying to reverse this equation now, to trust my body and enter it again with a whole heart. I know more now than I used to about what constitutes 'happy' and 'unhappy,' what the depths and textures of contentment are like. By letting go...I free up mental and emotional room. The pursuit of another, elusive body, the body someone else says I should have, is a terrible distraction, a sidetracking that might have lasted my whole life long.[44]

*

The authors have all escaped the subjugation and have joined their peers in similar struggles against the entire concept of oppression: obliteration of individuality and voice. Their stories can do nothing less than inspire the audience to shun the distractions in our own lives and take up more significant concerns. United—our souls with our bodies, and our factions with humanity—we will accomplish much more than we can stumbling blindly in the darkness of the Beast's Lair.

END NOTES

1. For example, for a detailed analysis of medicine as a social control system which instigates these standards, consult Eugenia Porto's article "Social Context and Historical Emergence: The Underlying Dimension of Medical Ethics," *Theoretical Medicine* 11 (1990) : 145–165. Based on Foucault's philosophy, Porto argues that modern medicine is incapable of taking into consideration a particular patient's status, and therefore it dehumanizes people to a physiological embodiment of a disease and causes the patient to assume the goal of "perfection" when this goal is impossible or not appropriate for their situation. She states, "As an arbitrating discourse, it ursurped the power of the individual by creating standards against which all measure themselves. Our standards are not our own creations, but standards given to us. Persons reduce themselves as they interpret themselves and their world in terms of these techniques of power. The very issues of autonomy and respect for individuals perpetuate a controlling apparatus that leaves persons striving for a goal within their prison of reduction" (Porto, 156–158).

2. Immaterial within my argument is whether real consequences exist in not meeting the standard; the issue is the self-hating, self-destructive sentiments incited by proliferated conceptions of physical perfection. Furthermore, I do not wish to insinuate that one form of oppression is more vicious than another, or one faction suffers more than another.

3. Patricia Foster, "Reading the Body: An Introduction," in *Minding the Body: Women Writers on Body and Soul* (New York: Anchor Books, 1994), 8, 11.

4. Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993), 272.

5. Foster, 6.

6. Nancy Mairs, "Carnal Acts," in *Minding the Body: Women Writers on Body and Soul*, ed. Patricia Foster (New York: Anchor Books, 1994), 272.

7. Malcolm X and Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), 33.

8. Phyllis Chesler, a proponent of feminist theory, writes, "Oppression is strong. It works. Torture demoralizes, cripples, and induces self-hatred and self-destructiveness. . . . [T]his behavior is typical of any oppressed group." (Phyllis Chesler, *Letters to a Young Feminist* (New York: Four Wall Eight Windows, 1997), 60, 57.

9. Sallie Tisdale, "A Weight that Women Carry: the Compulsion to Diet in a Starved Culture," in *Minding the Body: Women Writers on Body and Soul*, ed. Patricia Foster (New York: Anchor Books, 1994), 17, 30.

10. Foster, 1–7.

11. Furham et al., "Young People's Theories of Anorexia Nervosa and Obesity," *Counseling Psychologist* (December 1997), 391.

12. Cited in John Searles, "Anorexia," *Cosmopolitan* (October 1997), 224.

13. Angelou, 3.

14. Ibid., 22, 107.

15. April Sinclair, *Coffee Will Make You Black*, (New York: Avon Books, 1995), 4.

16. Ibid., 111.

17. Malcom X, 42, 166.

18. Ibid., 259.

19. Doris Grumbach, "Coming into the End Zone," in *Minding the Body: Women Writers on Body and Soul*, ed. Patricia Foster (New York: Anchor Books, 1994), 77.

20. Angelou, 273.

21. Ibid., 13.

22. Connie Porter, "Beauty and the Beast," in *Minding the Body: Women Writers on Body and Soul*, ed. Patricia Foster (New York: Anchor Books, 1994), 184.

23. Malcom X, 55–56.

24. Ibid., 56–57.

25. Ibid., 57.

26. Lynne Taetzsch, "Fighting Natural," in *Minding the Body: Women Writers on Body and Soul*, ed. Patricia Foster (New York: Anchor Books, 1994), 233, 245.

27. Ibid., 239–240.

28. Ibid., 246–247.

29. Ibid., 236

30. Ibid., 235.

31. Malcom X, 264.

32. Sinclair, 154.

33. Ibid., 148.

34. Tisdale, 20.

35. Sinclair, 166.

36. Ibid., 164.

37. Patricia Stevens, "Stiff Upper Lip," in *Minding the Body: Women Writers on Body and Soul,* ed. Patricia Foster (New York: Anchor Books, 1994), 289. Sinclair, 164.

38. Stevens, 294.

39. Tisdale, 29, 19.

40. Sinclair, 161.

41. Pamela Houston, "Out of Habit, I Start Apologizing," in *Minding the Body: Women Writers on Body and Soul*, ed. Patricia Foster (New York: Anchor Books, 1994), 150.

42. Sinclair, 118.

43. Mairs, 276.

44. Tisdale, 30.

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Spring Classes

RENÉE PAQUIN

I could sit and listen
To your droning dribble dread and drag,
Each syllable drawn
One long long EBS test.
I could—if I knew how to tie a noose.

But I'd much rather taste
The orange sun
Dripping through that window,
Freshly squeezed rays
California or Florida had nothing to do with.

I might even like to count
How many boys have noticed the rouge
Cotton slinky
I eased into like down a playground slide,
How it tingles my inches like wet sand.

I could turn my eyes to your voice,
Watch your chapped lips ooze sluggish and slow,
Hear the spit you swish as you speak
Of the drab gray fading in my aging text.

But seeping sunlight sensuously persuades
My vast green eyes to flicker,
From that dark gaping saliva-perspiring
Back-of-your-throat bottomless pit.

Something about your corpsey manner deters
As my sunny dress clings about my breasts and my hips.

Untitled, Someplace Balmy

RAYMOND CUMMINGS

the day's inspiration is
drained from the styrofoam lawn
of coffee cups, now neglected and
adorning the donut table, where there are no donuts.

the foreman will comb his hair anywhere except the bathroom.

around lunchtime, workers eat joylessly
from brown sacks; miles of fabric patterns:
solids, paislies, stripes, plaids
still race before their mind's dull eyes.
sandwiches are shared, bullfights and child-rearing gnawed.

on the rare occasions when insult turns to injury,
the sweatshop turns into a schoolyard;
gladiators do battle under the yelling and scrutiny
of a hundred fellow slaves, clutching sodas or apples.
they all cheer for the winner, no matter the ethnicity.

at five, the shop and the minds of its workers
shut down for the night. boy's turtlenecks are shipped
to Peru, petite dresses size 8 to the United States.
when the machines at last lie dormant and unmanned,
the foreman says his daily prayer, smiles,

flicks the lightswitch, erases it all.

CONTRIBUTORS

CHRISTINA CAVALIERE graduated in May 1999 with a double major in art and environmental studies. She was the winner of the 1999 Lynette Nielsen Art Award.

JORGE ALEJANDRO CISNEROS, originally from Eagle Pass, Texas, will graduate as a humanities major with the class of 2000. He has found for himself a fascinating area to work in, combining anthropology, literature, and linguistics to explore matters of identity and self-cognition.

RAYMOND CUMMINGS is "straight outta" Owings Mills, Maryland. He "blew this pop stand" in 1999 with majors in English and philosophy. Cummings harbors a deep respect for the talents of Malkmus, Ashbery, Ellis and Foucault.

TATIANA GIRALDO, from Colombia, will graduate in December 1999 with a major in the humanities. She plans to use the skills she learns here to defend her country from capitalist aggression.

MEGAN KILBY grew up on her family farm in Colora, Maryland. She is a junior with a double major in sociology and French studies, as well as a concentration in education. She hopes to become a French teacher and eventually attend graduate school. Her long-term goal is to learn Creole so that she can do research in Haiti.

CHRIS KLIMAS is a sophomore majoring in English and minoring in computer science. He is from Randallstown, Maryland and has never driven a truck.

JOLENE LEHR, heralding from Allentown, Pennsylvania, will graduate in 2000 with a major in English and minors in gender studies and art history. She named her dog after Sophie Kerr, but she realizes

that won't win her the writing prize. Jo would eventually like to earn a living by doing something she enjoys, like writing or appreciating art. Jo's heart would like to thank duly those who help in her continual attempt to escape the Beasts' Lair.

JENNIFER E. LUBKIN, of Dry Creek, Kentucky and Calvert County, Maryland, is entering her final year as an anthropology major and education track candidate. This autumn she will study abroad in Ecuador and complete a thesis project which combines her interests in anthropology, letterpress printing and hand papermaking. She was student editorial and production assistant of the previous volume of the *Washington College Review*.

JENNIFER MULLAN is a sophomore international studies major, with anthropology and Spanish minors. She didn't know what anthropology was until she was required to take it for her major. Lo and behold anthropology turned out to be her natural "worldview" embodied in an academic discipline. She would like to thank Dr. Jeanette Sherbondy, Jennifer Lubkin, and Mr. John Klutz for their hours of editing, and her family and friends for their support and confidence.

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RENÉE PAQUIN will graduate with the class of 2001. She is an English major with a creative writing minor and hopes to pursue a career in journalism. She is on the planning committee of the Writers' Union and a features writer for the *Elm*. She edited a student literary magazine entitled *(B)Rainstorm* in the spring of 1998.

JENNIFER REEDER, a native of northern Virginia, is an English major with a concentration in education. She will graduate in 2001. She says that her piece, "The Fundamental Theory of Calculus," demonstrates her very odd love of differential calculus equations—odd for an English major, anyway.

CECILIA M. RIVAS, from San Salvador, El Salvador, graduated in 1999 with a major in international studies and minors in economics and French. She spent a semester in the Universidad San Francisco in Quito, Ecuador. She has participated in the Model UN, the Model OAS, and the Model OAU, as well as several language clubs. In the future, she plans to attend graduate school, travel and taste exotic foods, including Cailles en Sarcophage avec Sauce Perigueux.

BEN SCHIEK graduated *cum laude* in 1999 with a major in English. He says, "Have a good day."

ERIN TOTTENHAM, class of 2000, was raised in Naugatuck, Connecticut and is majoring in English and education. Her lifelong dreams include becoming a published novelist and poet, and joining the Peace Corps. Inspiration to write has come from numerable experiences and influences on her life—including New England landscape artists: "I think that God is perhaps spinning us on this enormous record, which accounts for the circle effect of life that we often notice and also accounts for the connection that we sometimes feel with others, as if we are on the same line or groove. I think Andrew Wyeth is on my groove, and I deeply appreciate and am constantly reaching for the peace he creates in his paintings."

JASON YERKIE, a resident of Atlanta, Georgia, is in his third year with majors in philosophy and economics and a minor in computer science. This past summer he traveled to Cuba to study its higher education system as well as nationalist sentiments.

A Word from the Publisher: What We Say

We were reminded at commencement in May by the late John F. Kennedy, Jr., that the most successful of our undergraduates would not be those who have learned what there is "to know" in any given field of study, but rather those who have "learned how to learn." Teaching our students not *what* to think but *how* to think is, of course, at the heart of the liberal arts endeavor. Certainly it is central to our mission at Washington College—at least that is what we say time and again, implicitily and explicitly, in most all of our publications, from college catalog to website to press releases to the handsome pages of the *Washington College Magazine*.

But how can we gauge success in this endeavor? How do we know if we are succeeding at all?

One way is to take a careful look at some of our best students' writing, to see what they are saying and how they are saying it. A person cannot write well if he or she cannot think well. It is not by mere happenstance that one pens engaging and wonderfully thought-provoking essays of the type that grace these pages. Nor is it by fortuitous accident of language that one composes poems of the caliber we find here.

This symbiosis of writing and thinking is taken a step further with the British novelist E.M. Forster's oft-quoted question, "How do I know what I think till I see what I say?" To Forster, we do not simply express what we have thought, but we often learn what it is we are thinking while engaged in the process of perfecting its telling. All good writing is a record of good minds at work. That is what the *Washington College Review* is about: thinking for ourselves and, in the process, sharing our most interesting thoughts and emotions with others.

And so with this seventh volume, the *Washington College Review* continues its chronicle of laudable student efforts—critical and creative work from young writers who have learned how to learn, who have become exemplars of thought and artistic craft among their fellows. This journal is a uniquely significant publication for our college because, unlike our other presentations to the public, these pages do not offer promises of our students' enrichment, but stand as evidence that those promises are being fulfilled.

Robert Mooney
Publisher

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